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GHOSTS OF MARS

JOHN
CARPENTER
EXCLUSIVE

ON-
LOCATION
REPORT

ALL THE GOOD STUFF:
LORD OF THE RINGS
JEEPERS CREEPERS
GINGER SNAPS
BIRTH OF A.I.

Oct/Nov Volume 33 No 5



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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

OCT/NOV/2001

Okay, I'll admit it: Summer sucked. There I was in the last editorial, going on all smug 'n' knowledgeable about how pessimistic people become when evaluating a film season. Little did I dream that Hollywood had loaded its summer blockbuster pistol largely with blanks.

With the sole exception of SHREK—immensely entertaining and technically revolutionary, if still lacking the depth of the more sophisticated Pixar efforts—the best all those vast, media conglomerates could come up with was the expected visual bravura and narrative weakness of Tim Burton's PLANET OF THE APES, and the more-entertaining-as-a-glimpse-of-the-future-than-as-an-actual-story FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN (though I personally found those stunning visuals entertainment enough).

At the time of writing, JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS remains a question mark, though all the buzz so far has been decidedly mixed. Even Denise Dumars, author of our coverage, wasn't sold on the final product (see her review on page 60). Yet Carpenter is nothing if not known for splitting audiences between rabid fans and everyone else. So despite the bad buzz, this still holds some potential for pulling the summer out of its doldrums.

In a similar vein, I can't help but hope that the soon-to-debut ENTERPRISE will be the shot of adrenaline the STAR TREK franchise has desperately needed for so long. There's been no argument that VOYAGER suffered a severe case of iron-poor blood, even though Anna Kaplan—in the first part of her coverage of the series' final two seasons—found enough worthwhile to merit a second glimpse. With the big leap back to the Federation's early days, here's hoping that ENTERPRISE star Scott Bakula will be permitted to indulge in the kinds of activities that starship captains have become famous for: engaging in knuckle-brusing fist-fights and impregnating as many half-nekkid, green alien chicks as possible.

That's not too much to ask, is it?

—Dan Persons



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CFQ Preview

The Commence Drooling Edition

Compiled by Dan Persons

MONSTERS INC. (Disney)

November 2

The trailer for the next project from the Pixar powerhouse offered one indelible image (amongst many): a doorway frames a mammoth, hairy beast as he runs, screaming, from some unseen horror. There's the pause of a beat, then the object of terror moves into view: a diminutive toddler, gleefully giggling, "Kitty!" as she trots in pursuit. As with the TOY STORY series, MONSTERS INC. seeks a broad-based audience by melding child-accessible fantasy (monsters harvest the screams of children) with distinctly adult neuroses (the hypochondriacal beasts regard their victims as ambulatory bundles of contagion). The plot itself revolves around that cute little kid finding her way into the monster world—a risky set-up, if the treatment teeters too far towards sentimentality. Pixar has dodged this bullet before; odds are good they'll pull it off this time, too.



HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE (Warner Bros.) November 16

The question remains whether, once this adaptation satisfies the curiosity of its core, juvenile audience, there will be enough adult and near-adult posteriors filling the seats to justify the staggering sums of money invested in production and promotion. Do not underestimate the skills of Chris Columbus. For all that his commercial instincts may rankle the purists, the guy has an undeniable way with kids in hyperbolic fantasy situations.

LORD OF THE RINGS: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING (New Line)

December 19

Admit it: this is the wellspring; the source from which most contemporary fantasy—written and filmed—flows. Which means that everything that has flashed onto the screen prior to this—WILLOW, THE DARK CRYSTAL, DRAGONSLAYER, all of it—has been but a pale imitation, a knock-off of this masterly trilogy. It also means that Peter Jackson—he of MEET THE FEEBLES, DEAD ALIVE, and HEAVENLY CREATURES, he who has been trusted by New Line with upwards of 270 million dollars to bring this whole thing to vivid, state-of-the-art life—has got a *helluva* lot riding on his not-inconsiderable talents. The eighteen minutes of footage that New Line showed the press this past spring bade well—the sequence of the fellowship being assaulted by Orcs was suitably dynamic, but the follow-up chase on a spectacular stairway was the certified mind-blower. That was only eighteen minutes out of a rumored 165, though. Can Jackson go the distance? The fate of one of the most adventurous studios may well ride on the answer.



THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH BUFFY

Fox Re-Asserts Ownership by Creating Animated Series

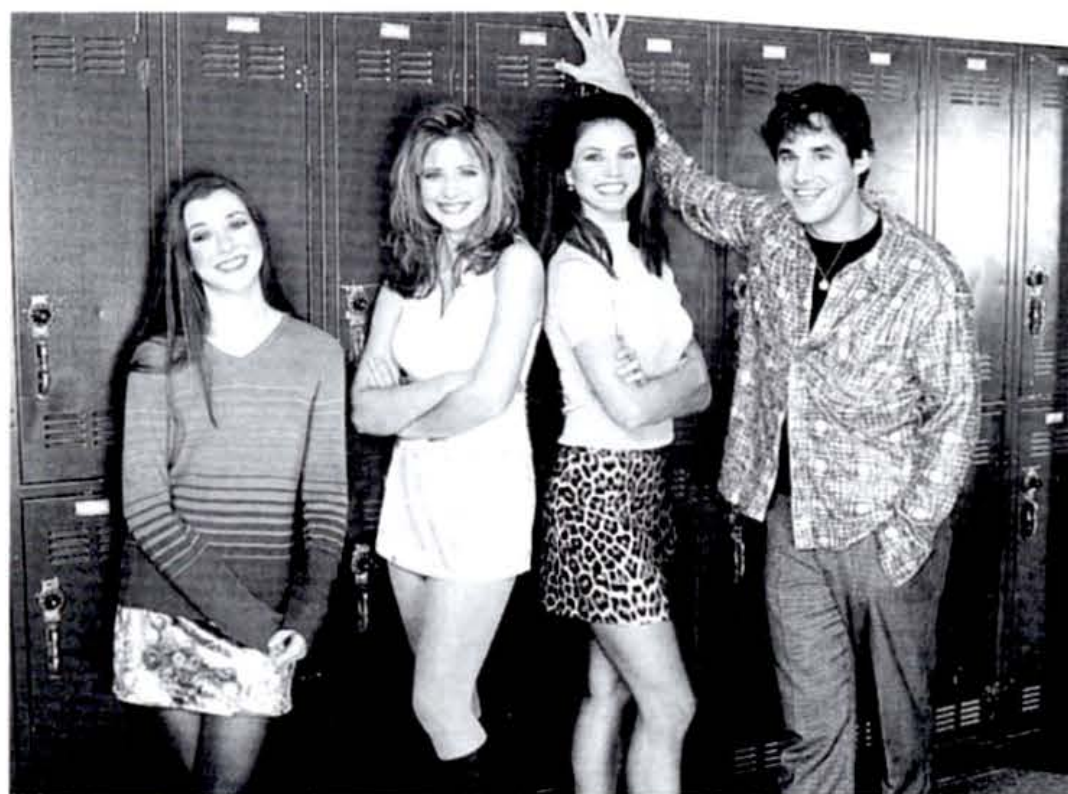
by Russell Lissau

Buffy, Willow, Xander, and the rest of the world's greatest vampire-slaying team will soon be hunting the undead on Saturday mornings. Work has begun to bring **BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: THE ANIMATED SERIES**—executive produced by **BUFFY** creator Joss Whedon and screenwriter/producer Jeph Loeb (**TEEN WOLF**, **COMMANDO**)—to television by September 2002. It is slated to air on the Fox Kids Network.

When the live-action **BUFFY** aired on the WB network, it was preceded by a "for teen and adult audiences" warning. The cartoon however, will be appropriate for viewers of all ages. Loeb, who has made a name for himself in recent years as the writer of such critically acclaimed comic books as *Batman: Dark Victory*, *Superman* and *Daredevil: Yellow*, said the show will appeal to longtime **BUFFY** fans and to viewers who are visiting the demon-infested town of Sunnydale for the first time.

"We want to produce a show that will keep the **BUFFY** core audience happy, introduce the show to a new audience and age group, and still keep the integrity of the original series," Loeb said. "The key is to make the show very accessible and still keep the [fans] happy. Joss is really up for the challenge."

Each half-hour animated episode will be a self-contained story, unlike the ongoing drama of the live-action show. The series will also take place during the early years of Buffy's vampire-slaying career. Whereas Buffy and her friends have moved on to college in the live-action show, the animated series will bring them back to high school. "The show will take place in 'Year One,' in this case, Buffy's sophomore year," Loeb said. "Unlike the live-action series, the plan right now is for Buffy to always stay in the 15- to 16-year-old world, where the metaphors for teen angst really ring the truest. So that [defines] our cast: Buffy, Xander, Giles, Willow, Joyce [Buffy's mom], Principal Snyder, and some



The Slayer gets a chance to relive the early days when Fox Kids sends her back to high school for the animated series.

surprises. We don't want to give away too much—we want there to be some surprises."

Loeb, Whedon, and Fox Kids have been talking about a run of about twenty-six episodes. "We should be so lucky," Loeb joked. Although an animation studio had not been chosen as of press time, Loeb and Whedon want to give the show a very stylized, high-end look. "If we had to pick a look, it would be more in the vein of **BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES**," Loeb said. "Joss's hallmark is quality television. The animated series needs to meet those standards."

Loeb, a big fan of the live-action **BUFFY** show, was thrilled when he was asked to help develop the animated program. Among the other people working on the project are the regular **BUFFY** writers, who each have expressed interest in writing at least one cartoon episode. "BUFFY fans should rejoice—this will be more of the same unique, special writing that **BUFFY** is known for," Loeb said. "Joss and I are writing the first episode and the [show's] bible together as we speak. And together with the **BUFFY** writing staff, we are concurrently coming up with stories for fantastic future episodes. We have at least ten that

we're very happy with already. It absolutely blows my mind that we have such an amazingly talented group of people working on the show."

BUFFY fans surely are dying to know whether any of the actors in the live-action show will be reprising their roles with voice-over work for the cartoon. Nothing has been determined yet, but Loeb is hopeful that Sarah Michelle Gellar (**Buffy**), Nicholas Brendon (**Xander**), Alyson Hannigan (**Willow**), and the other actors will join the animated team. "We hope that all the cast members participate!" Loeb said excitedly. "It's too soon to tell, but that would obviously be our first choice. Sarah would be a wonderful addition to what will surely be an extraordinary show."

Further News by Dan Persons

The gate remains open: **STAR-GATE SG-1** has found life after Showtime handed the series its walking papers. The Sci Fi Channel has ordered another twenty-two episodes, to start airing in January. This is the third MGM-produced series to be picked up by Sci Fi, following **POLTERGEIST: THE LEGACY**, and **THE OUTER LIMITS**. Good to know that in the

unlikely event the James Bond franchise goes belly-up, it has a home on basic cable... There is Such a Thing as Too Much Success Dept: Never mind that **EXORCISTS 2** and **3** pleased no one. Never mind that John Frankenheimer's last big "horror" effort was **THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU**. Never mind that William Blatty told *Variety* that the exorcism in one proposed script was more like **THE PRODUCERS**, and that another draft was "boring." The re-mastered version of the original film did so well that Warners is going ahead with **THE EXORCIST PART IV**—actually a prequel to the events of the first film—with Frankenheimer directing... ABC is taking the next big leap by backing **LIVIN' DOLLS**, an original musical about a girl magically transported to the world of her mother's circa 1960 Barbie-like toy beach house. **AMERICAN BEAUTY**'s Dan Jinks and Bruce Cohen will produce; Marc Shaiman and Scot Wittman will handle music and lyrics, respectively... No time for Cenobites: Clive Barker has pacted with Nickelodeon to bring **ECTO-KID**, about a boy in touch with both our world and the Great Beyond, to both the large and small screens... That ol' Typewriter in the Sky is being dusted off once more for **KUNG FU THEATER**, about a comic-book artist who gets zapped into one of those badly-dubbed Saturday afternoon martial arts flicks. Director Nick Quested makes his feature-film debut on this script by **GROSSE POINTE BLANK**'s Tom Jankiewicz... Let's just pretend that **TOMB RAIDER** didn't happen, mmm-kay? Dimension's ponying up for film and TV versions of video game **MAX PAYNE**, a noirish adventure game that was only just released this past July... Ursula Le Guin's first **EARTHSEA** novel is coming to TV as a six-hour miniseries, thanks to the Sci Fi Channel. **LORD OF THE RINGS** adapter Philippa Boyens will work on the script... Crop circles figure prominently in M. Night Shyamalan's next pic, **SIGNS**, from Disney.

CFQ

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Christopher Lee Fulfills a Dream and Gets to Visit Middle Earth as the Evil Wizard Saruman

By Ross Plesset

"I think these films could create cinema history."

- Christopher Lee

Being involved in a film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* was a dream come true for Christopher Lee, the legendary actor whom director Peter Jackson cast as the fallen wizard Saruman.

The actor's fascination with

like it has ever been written. People like Jonathan Swift, Lewis Carroll, and Mervyn Peake invented imaginary worlds. Then along comes Professor Tolkien. Not only does he invent an imaginary world which, according to him, is 7,000 years ago in England, but he invents imaginary races which you can easily believe in. And what is even more remarkable is that he invented new languages. You can, in fact, learn to read, write, and

nation, the love, the dedication, the genius—I mean, there's no other word... I love fantasy, [so] this was just the sort of book that appealed to me. I read it every year."

It was hardly surprising, then, to find out that Lee had long wanted to play one of the characters. "Of course, being an actor, the thought went through my mind, all those years ago, *Wouldn't it be wonderful if it*

could be made as a series of films, which is now the case. I also thought, *Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could play in it if it's ever made?* Naturally, in the '50s I was

nearly fifty years younger, so I had dreams of playing Gandalf. When my dream was realized and a production took place, I met [director] Peter Jackson (*HEAVENLY CREATURES*) in London, and I was asked if I would play Saruman.

"It was a dream come true, because I realized that I was much too old to play Gandalf. I could not have done the physical things that Ian McKellen (*GODS AND MONSTERS*) has done in the production. He's seventeen years younger than me, and I think he found them exhausting, so I never could have played Gandalf. I'm too old and I accept that. The playing of Gandalf could not be in better hands."

What was that initial meeting with Jackson like? "They asked me if I would do a reading. Some people would have

said 'No.' I certainly didn't. I met with him in London in the back room of an old church. He was there with a casting director and his wife Fran, who is one of the writers. They asked me to read a scene in front of a video camera. I read a scene between Gandalf and Frodo, and I think it must have been one of the first ones."

Although he read as Gandalf, "From what I've heard subsequently, Peter had always had me in mind to play Saruman. I think he was just asking me to read something. My passion and love for the work was very obvious to him, because he shares it—as indeed do we all. The whole cast and the whole crew have such a dedication to this work that I have never experienced anything like it."

"I've been very fortunate in recent years. I did *SLEEPY HOLLOW* with Tim Burton—great cast, great crew; *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*—great cast, great crew; and the new *STAR WARS*—great cast, great crew. I worked with three of the finest directors around today. I am very fortunate, particularly at my age."

Lee, who seemed tireless in his willingness to discuss Middle-earth—sometimes talking about it as if it were a real place—described the character Saruman and its appeal: "Wizards are always fascinating characters, aren't they? There's a quote, 'Do not meddle in the affairs of wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger.' You've got such complex characters as

MOLDING MAGIC: Ian McKellen (left) oversaw the makeup and costuming of his Gandalf the Grey, while Christopher Lee placed his faith in director Peter Jackson's crew.

the book goes back nearly half a century, when Volume One, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, was first published. "I was so immensely impressed with what I read—like so many other people—I couldn't wait for the second one and then the third one. I was an immediate...I don't think fan is strong enough a word—I was an acolyte you might say! [Laughter].

"I had never read anything like it. To be honest, nothing

speak Quenya and Sindarin. He was a professor of philology. What he did is something that I think is unique in the history of literature. That's one point.

"The other point is that he created a world of beings unlike anything anyone had ever read before, with very long appendices with all the family trees and the names of the previous kings and the hobbits. It's quite incredible, really... The scholarship that went into it, the imagi-

immortals in human form, wielding vast powers, and then in the case of one of them—the greatest of them all—being prisoner of the dark power because of his ambition. This is what happens to Saruman. He, thousands of years ago, was the greatest, the most brilliant, the most powerful, the noblest. Even Gandalf says that, and all the books will tell you that. But at some stage, which is never defined, he feels that he is more powerful than Sauron and that he can take over as Lord of the Rings. Well he learns, to his cost, that he is mistaken. So it's a big question of a man of great intellect, brilliance, and so on, being tempted. Temptation overcomes him."



ENCOUNTERING THE CLASSIC: A long-time admirer of the Tolkien trilogy, Christopher Lee (top) lived the fantasy as madened wizard Saruman. **LEFT:** Hobbit friends Samwise (Sean Astin) and Frodo (Elijah Wood).

As a rule, Lee never takes a role unless it is a challenge, and Saruman was certainly no exception. "You have to make the audience believe in his immense power. You also have to make [them] believe that he is a very considerable hypnotist, particularly with his voice—it's very hypnotic. People fall under the spell—Gandalf doesn't, of course, Gimli doesn't, and King Theoden eventually doesn't. They see him for what he is, but not at first. So we had to make people believe that there's a man who is an immortal in a human body and he has this immense power. The question is, what's he going to do with it? Does he control it? Does he believe in his own destiny or are there any doubts? All of these things are there, so it is very definitely a challenge. This is not a film for children where you appear as a benevolent Merlin. Far from it.

"I've read one of the Harry

Potter books. I have no idea what the film [will be] like, but it seems to me that it is for children, although I think grown-up people would enjoy it. **THE LORD OF THE RINGS** is not for children—I say children of eight, nine, or ten. Some of them will go, undoubtedly." He cited the hobbits as the only characters with whom children could associate in this trilogy, which is full of battle, sudden death, and the occasional grotesque creature.

The actor/Tolkien expert had high praise for the people involved in the production, including Peter Jackson. "The fact that Peter Jackson was able to get New Line to agree to make three films is in itself an extraordinary achievement, so he deserves all of the credit. He is the central figure, he is the puppet master. I don't mean to say that we are dancing about at the end

of strings—we aren't—but he's the man who holds the threads of power in the story.

"He's a brilliant man. His knowledge is phenomenal, and his love of the stories and his dedication to the filming is amazing. I never saw him exchange a cross word or lose his cool, ever. He was under immense pressures all the time: shooting three films at once, shooting one scene, which would be in front of him and then

switching to a couple of monitors to watch a couple of other scenes that were being shot on two other stages, maybe even more! The guiding hand, the man in charge, is Peter Jackson, ably helped by Barrie Osborne, the producer, and others like [associate producer] Rick Porras, and [executive producer] Mark Ordesky, and with the full backing by New Line. They should be given great credit for their faith and belief in the films. I don't know what the cost has been except what has been quoted in the press, \$270 million for three films. I don't think they have anything to worry about."

Although Peter Jackson encouraged the actors to present their own ideas, Lee had no desire to deviate from the script.

"From reading the books so often, I naturally already knew Saruman and all of [the characters] intimately. The way he is presented in the script is the way he is presented in the book, more so in some cases. So what was on the printed page was what I did. If the director wanted different interpretation or different meaning or emphasis given to a line, a phrase, or even a word, I did it. To me, he always seemed to be right."

Neither did Lee offer any input into his costume or makeup (as did Ian McKellen). "I accepted the costume design, because it was exactly what I expected it to be, and the makeup was ideal."

Naturally, Lee had to be tight-lipped about certain aspects of the film. "We all had to sign confidentiality agreements. There have been unauthorized things which have appeared on the Internet. In June or July of last year there was a picture of me taken on my first day's work—don't ask me how."

As a Lord of the Rings "acolyte," Lee admitted to being very fortunate, indeed. Besides acting in the movie, "I met Tolkien once in Oxford with a group of other people by sheer chance. I just said, 'How do you do?' that was all. I was very much in awe, as you can imagine."

CFQ

SET STORIES

Chapter I

From Vancouver, With Lurch

The Earth Moves for the Crew of THE OUTER LIMITS

By Frank Garcia

As if an invisible hand had pushed it, the chandelier hanging from the scaffolding swayed in the air, swinging back and forth, back and forth. Reacting to the movement, supervising producer Matt Hastings and this writer sharply looked up. Then we felt a mild rumbling that lasted perhaps ten to fifteen seconds.

The next instinct was to look straight up, towards the soundstage roofing above us, and wonder, *What's going to fall?* What was above was a criss-cross of beam structures, a part of the set's construction.

On February 28, 2001, Seattle, Washington received a powerful 6.8 Richter scale earthquake, damaging many areas of that city. Fortunately, in the Vancouver, Canada soundstages of THE OUTER LIMITS, approximately three and a half hours north of Seattle by automobile, the quake was felt with less intensity, causing no damage to the city or buildings.

Ironically, the presence of a real earthquake did not immediately startle the cast and crew. Having the earth shake was actually a part of the scene being filmed at the time.

This was the setup: veteran director Jorge Montesi was inside a log-cabin set built especially for screenwriter Alan Brennert's outer space adventure, "In the Blood," an episode which guest-starred Greg Evigan (TEKWAR), Cameron Daddo (FX - THE SERIES), and Irene Bedard. Montesi was behind the camera, surrounded by cast and crew facing the cabin's doorway. Supervising producer Matt Hastings was sitting at an adjacent table in the background, demonstrating the *Star Trek: Elite Force* computer game to Daddo on his Apple Powerbook.

The scene to be filmed? Greg Evigan, as starship pilot Jim Dreedan, was just landing his futuristic transport shuttle at a desert location, paying a visit to his friends Callie Whitehorse Landau (Bedard) and Alec (Daddo) in order to recruit them for an important space mission.

The scene had off-camera grips physically shaking the doorway facade of the log cabin and simultaneously pumping white

smoke into the building to simulate the shuttle's arrival. The camera was inside, looking out into bright, white light as the shadowy, green-fatigued figure of Evigan stepped through the doorway. Almost on cue, with the camera rolling and the grips shaking the cabin's frame, the earthquake struck.

"It was an interesting moment!" said Matt Hastings afterwards. "It was fascinating that the set kept swinging even after the grips had stopped! You and I looked at each other, and it was an ironic moment: We were creating an earthquake, and then there was an actual earthquake happening simultaneously. Mother Nature added the perfect rumble to our backdrop."

Later, on a break outside the soundstages, actress Bedard was so jazzed by the event that she excitedly recounted how, while growing up in Alaska, she had witnessed entire buildings swaying back and forth during a quake.

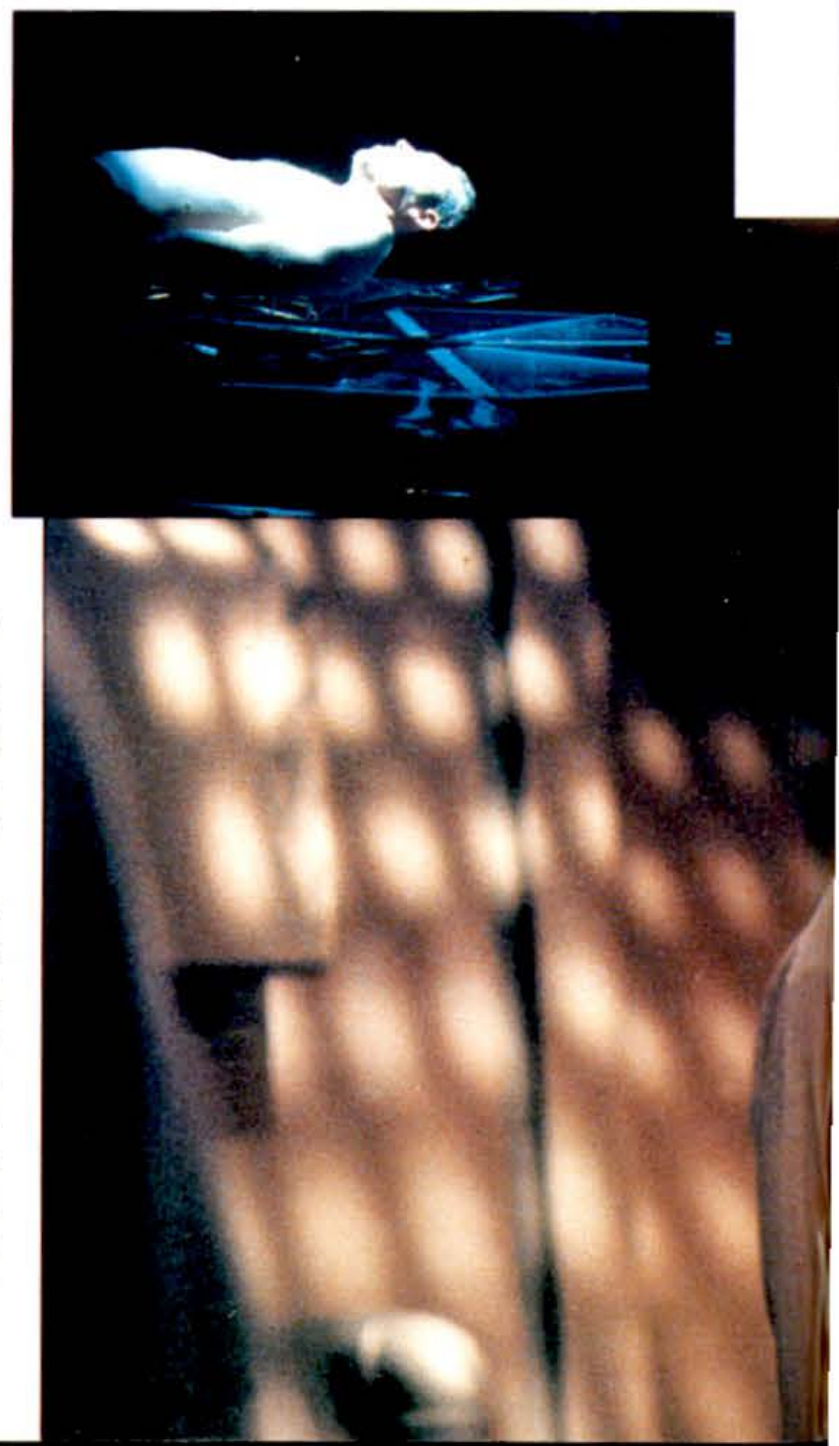
Returning for a seventh season on the Sci Fi Channel after being cancelled by Showtime, THE OUTER LIMITS was in full swing for another collection of twenty-two eclectic episodes of suspenseful science fiction adventures. This year, knowledgeable fans recognized many names in front of and behind the cameras. Actors included TWIN PEAKS' Sherilyn Fenn ("Replica"), BLAIR WITCH's Heather Donahue ("The Surrogate"), TOTAL RECALL's Rachel Ticotin ("Mona Lisa"), and SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE's Nora Dunn ("Dark Child").

Where the show featured new blood was in series production designer Phil Knight, who came to the show from POLTERGEIST: THE LEGACY. Also new to the show was Matt Hastings.

Talking about filming Alan Brennert's script, "In the Blood," Hastings said, "I'm new on this show and it's a thrill to work with Alan. This is truly an ambitious script. The characters are so well defined. It highlights the struggle between technology and humanity and spirituality. On the ship, the "Copernicus," the Captain is a Texas fly-boy who has a mission he must accomplish and he must get into trans-

space, a parallel universe from our own. His mission is to go in there and try and map it so they can use it as a shortcut to the stars. It can eliminate the obstacle of the speed of light. Meanwhile, Callie, who's one of four on the ship, is a native American, and she's lost touch with her spirituality. She's carrying a lot of guilt for abandoning the true Navaho way. Throughout the story, she gets more and more connected to that spirituality via her subconscious mind, which projects flashbacks or memories that interact with her dead grandmother, who is trying to convince Callie that the area of space they are in, trans-space, is actually alive and a living being."

"I loved the script!" said an excited Greg Evigan, talking in his trailer. "That's why I wanted to do this. I liked the whole concept of tearing the fabric of space and being in another whole universe. It's kind of like the



black hole theory."

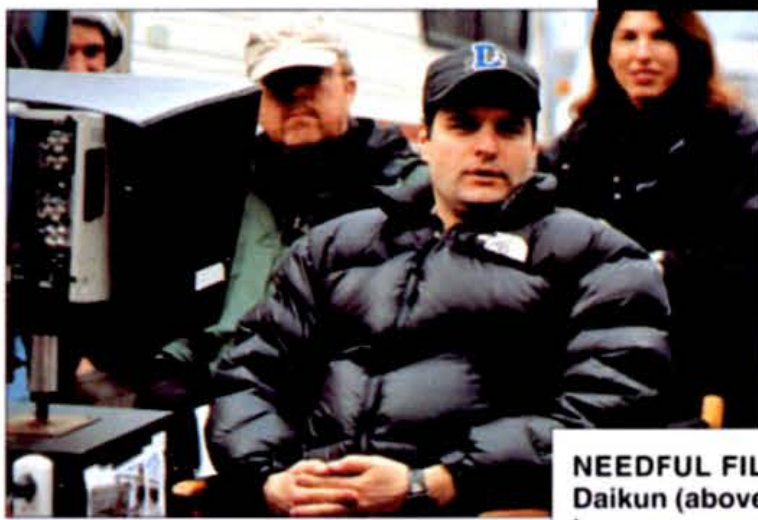
Evidently, Evigan is genuinely interested in the sciences, devouring *Scientific American* and *Discover* magazines. "I'm really into all that. I liked the whole possibility of us going out there. A lot of people are really into that and want to hear the details."

In reading his script, Evigan was startled to read weighty dialogue discussing subatomic particles and quantum accelerators. "Those things exist! You do a lot of research on not just pronunciation, but the meaning behind each word."

Evigan said that his character, NASA Flight Crew Director James Dreedan, commands the first survey to go into a new-found spatial continuum. "He's really a guy who believes in manifest destiny for the human race—that we're meant to go further than our solar system. We're meant to go into the universe because we can conceive it. That's really the thrust of this guy. He's got a small ship and crew of specialists to see what the effects of trans-space are."

For actress Irene Bedard, who has specialized in Native American roles in such Hollywood productions as Disney's *POCAHONTAS* and *THE REAL ADVENTURES OF JONNY QUEST*, appearing in an episode of *THE OUTER LIMITS* was a new, exciting adventure. "It's been a great experience for me! Being Native American, we usually find ourselves limited to a lot of historical filmmaking in the twentieth century. But now, we're here in the twenty-first

century! We're finally getting there. For me it's been a wonderful learning experience to be here in the high-tech world and getting to go through what I learned in



NEEDFUL FILMMAKERS: Alex Daikun (above) is an alien serving penance on Earth in "Alien Shop," a stealth pilot directed by Peter DeLuise (left).

theater, but when I was there, it was something that interested me very much. To be able to be here is a wonderful opportunity. We're talking about gravitons, atomic particles. It's really a challenge to meld those thoughts when you have emotional content. It is a daunting task! I'm glad to have been through the experience.

"This is a story about one woman's relationship to the universe. It's also a story about her relationship with her cultural universe as well. It's about how she discovers ancient knowledge that has been passed down to her from generation to generation."

Because the *OUTER LIMITS* is now filmed in a six-day shoot schedule, instead of seven or eight when the show was on Showtime, it adds greater pressures for everyone involved.

"Because it does take place, mostly, on the bridge of the Copernicus and in the infirmary and the escape pod, it makes sense to shoot in six days," said Hastings. "It just adds up to how many pages you shoot each day. It puts a little bit more pressure on us but that pressure just lights a fire into all of us. That will be reflected on the screen with the performances."

Evigan remarked, "If we're going to get it, we should make this as good as we can with the amount of time we've got. Last night we're doing a very dramatic scene, the whole thing is coming to a peak. She closes the door, ejects the pod, goes out into space, and we've got fifteen minutes to shoot it. The end product is something that no one remembers what happened except for the actors and everyone that was there. That's

physics class. I was a philosophy major and switched to

why you have to be meticulous, because in the end, what people see is on the screen."

Other suspenseful episodes included "Alien Shop," a show written by executive producer Pen Densham that also functioned as a potential pilot for a Sci Fi Channel series. Director Peter DeLuise, who helmed this episode, described the storyline: "Alex Diakun plays a mysterious alien shopkeeper who is a shapeshifter much like [STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE's] Odo, and he can shapeshift from his alien form into various humanoid forms. The story suggests that there is an alien from another planet who has set himself up as an antiques/curios shop keeper. He distributes special objects that seem familiar to us but also have some special treats to them. And these curios help these particular customers go through an emotional or moral lesson. Hopefully, they will make the right choices and be better for the experience."

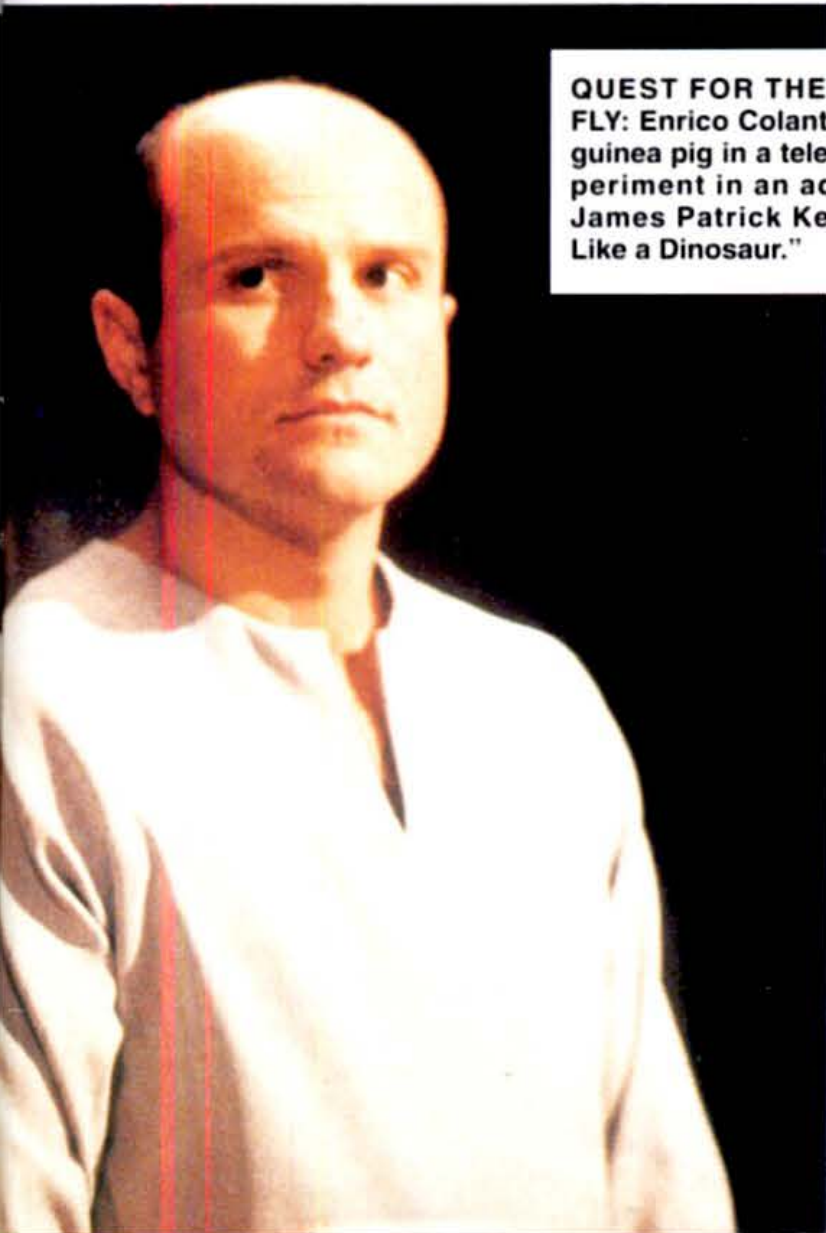
"His time on this planet is to help humans go through various morality plays to set us into the right direction. And this shopkeeper is paying his own penance by having to distribute these lessons."

Other episodes this season included "Replica," a story starring Sherilyn Fenn about, according to Matt Hastings, pulling "information out of the human brain, kind of like loading a disk onto a hard drive, and then [reinstalling] it into someone who's got Alzheimer's disease." Also seen was an adaptation of author James Patrick Kelly's short story, "Think Like a Dinosaur," about "breaking the space/time continuum and actually transporting people across the cosmos in an instant," said Hastings. "An alien force has made an agreement with humanity to help us cultivate this new technology, and are using humans as their guinea pigs. It's our only hope to get off the planet and into the cosmos and other environments."

But that, hope the producers, is only the beginning. Stay tuned. Just when you thought you'd regained control of your television set, *THE OUTER LIMITS* will gleefully snatch it away from you, one hour at a time.

CFQ

QUEST FOR THE BRUNDLE-FLY: Enrico Colantoni (left) is a guinea pig in a teleportation experiment in an adaptation of James Patrick Kelly's "Think Like a Dinosaur."



SET STORIES

Chapter II

We Ask Only for Your Talent, Dedication, and a Few Layers of Flesh

Being an Actress on GINGER SNAPS Can Really Take It Out of You

By Paul Wardle

It was a fatigued but friendly atmosphere on the set of GINGER SNAPS. The Canadian production was being shot in Toronto, and interior shots had been going on all night, every night for weeks. In the sequence being filmed for the intense, bizarre werewolf flick, Ginger (played by Katherine Isabelle) lay on her bed, while her sister (played by Emily Jean Perkins) pierced the girl's stomach with a silver pin—a procedure they hoped would cure Ginger's lycanthropy. When the cameras rolled, the groans and "eeews" coming from the crew testified to the authenticity of the scene, even with the fake skin that Emily pierced instead of Katherine's abdomen. Afterwards, as Katherine sat in full makeup and claws, trading SIMPSONS trivia with publicist Corey Ferguson, it struck us how strange it was that a girl who was perfectly comfortable writhing about on a bed in her underwear in front of a lot of male crew members had earlier confessed to feeling skittish talking to an interviewer while fully clothed.

Corey decided that Isabelle might be more comfortable if we interviewed her and Emily Perkins together. Isabelle plays a sixteen-year-old high school student in GINGER SNAPS. In reality, the actress is eighteen, and Perkins, who plays fifteen-year-old Brigitte, is really twenty-two. Unlike Isabelle, Perkins seemed at ease, immediately beginning to tease Isabelle in

order to break the tension.

As soon as she knew the tape recorder was on, Perkins started in: "She looks so sweet, but in reality, she's a total bitch!"

"You are going to get a punch in the head later when no one's around!" Isabelle countered. Soon, everyone was laughing, and we realized that these two really do act like sisters. Their affection for each other was genuine.

As Ginger Fitzgerald, the teenager who is

bit-
ten
by a
we-
wolf, Is-
abelle had to
undergo no
end of torturous
makeup and pros-
thetics. The twelve-to-
twenty hour night
shoots left her little
time off the set, but on one oc-
casion, when she had a few
hours between set-ups, Isabelle
went outside and rented a movie
from Blockbuster in full were-
wolf attire: fangs, claws, and
sexy outfit.

As the lead character, Is-

abelle is in virtually every
scene, and because her transfor-
mation from schoolgirl into
werewolf takes place gradually,
over the course of the film, each
new day's shooting could entail

different degrees of
pain. To add to
the confusion,
GINGER
SNAPS,
like most
films,
was
shot



FERAL FEATURES: With a storyline that required a slow transition to lycanthropy, the cast of GINGER SNAPS had to make a long-term commitment to their makeup effects.

out of
sequence.
This left Is-
abelle confused
as well as exhausted
from day to
day.

"I don't
even know
any more,"
she said,
wearily. "I
haven't seen
the sun in
two weeks, and time has all
congealed into this one big
blob. I don't know what day it
is or what time it is. They just
glue some stuff on me and I go
out there. I don't even try to
keep track any more."

Both Isabelle and Perkins

had been keeping up this insane
schedule for seven to eight
weeks at the time of our visit,
though only the last two had
been night shoots. This was
November, 1999 in Toronto, and
sunlight was rare. At various
points in the shooting schedule,
Isabelle would begin her day
with three to four hours of pros-
thetic makeup applied to most
of her body. "It takes another
hour and a half to get it off," she
said. "I only scream when I have
fake blood on me, because it
glues the clothes to my skin, and
I will stand in the corner of the
studio and scream when I rip
these clothes off. It hurts a lot!

It's an every day thing for me,"

We wanted to get both ac-
tresses' opinions on the
original controversy that
had dogged this produc-
tion from its inception: the
parental paranoia that fol-
lowed in the wake of the Little-
ton, Colorado and Taber, Alberta
shootings in early 1999. Al-
though there is relatively little
violence in GINGER SNAPS
compared to something like
SCREAM, and no slashings or
teen shootings, the film was
dubbed a "teen slasher flick" in
Toronto newspapers before the
production was under way.

"I don't know too much
about it," revealed Isabelle, "but
the people who were reporting
on it hadn't read the script."

Perkins added that she does-
n't really like violence in films,
"unless there's a reason for it." Referring to elements in the
film that equate hormonal
changes, disease, and the isola-
tion of the unpopular student
with lycanthropy, she added, "I
think the violence in GINGER

SNAPS is justified, because of its metaphorical content."

Isabelle agreed that the innovative script, by Canadian writer Karen Walton, intelligently addresses teen angst and the pressures felt by high-school students to conform: "It's the mood swings, it's the pressure of fitting in. Your body is changing and you don't know what the fuck is happening, yet you don't want to talk about it; you don't want anyone to find out."

"This film is female centered," added Perkins. "It really deals with some of the issues [that affect teenage girls], like your body turning against you."

Playing the mother of the Fitzgerald sisters is the supremely-gorgeous Mimi Rogers, who traded in her vampy glamour to play a typical yuppie wife and mother. "We hate our mother," exclaimed Isabelle. "We hate her life; we don't want anything to do with her. We're so weird and she's so perfect and cheerful."

Perkins agreed. "The [mother character] is a collaborator in the patriarchal scheme of things, not that we necessarily have that level of consciousness. [Our characters] don't at all. We just don't want to become like her."

Both actresses believe there will be a lot for teenagers to relate to in these characters. "There isn't any image of femininity that they can hold that reflects their individuality and subjectivity," Perkins said. "Besides these two girls, everyone else is just a stereotype. That's what our media portrays."

Both actresses echo the sentiments of many in the film world who complain that there aren't enough good roles for women. Even with so many movies being made about teenagers, they still find this to be true.

"They suck!" remarked Perkins. "I was ready to give up acting before I got this job, because I was so disgusted and disillusioned with [the parts that were available to me]. Either they want you to play a slut or an action hero."

Both of these stars can do so much more. It is indeed fortunate that they scored such a unique and high-quality showcase for their talents. **CFQ**

SET STORIES

Chapter III

Weren't You Teaching at the Actor's Studio Last Year?

Life-Lessons Imparted On Location With SUSPENDED ANIMATION

By Mitch Persons

The Holiday Motel in Santa Monica, California will never be confused with one of the many Holiday Inns that pepper the U.S. Indeed, the modest, slightly seedy, one-story edifice has about as much resemblance to the famed chain as a mushroom does to a Sequoia. But for John Hancock, director of *SUSPENDED ANIMATION*, the lack of franchise polish was perfect for the dark tale he wished to tell. Standing behind his camera and sound crew at the end of the parking lot, Hancock yells, "Action." An SUV with actor Alex McArthur at the wheel pulls into the lot. Next to McArthur is actress Maria Cina, who is playing the role of Clara Hansen. Hansen is, at the moment, in great pain. She laboriously gets out, gives a feeble wave to McArthur, then limps up to the door of her room. McArthur hastily drives off.

Hancock yells, "Cut." Cina turns to Hancock, asking, "How was that?"

"Just fine," answers the director.

"Well, I don't think it was fine," comes a whiskey-soaked voice from behind.

All heads turn. Standing in an open doorway is a woman dressed, or rather, undressed, in filmy bikini undies. She is tall and shapely, but possessed of a set of rotted, yellow teeth. She reeks of dollar-a-gallon liquor, cigarettes and long, sad nights. By the many surprised (and the few desirous) looks that the woman gets from the crew, it is evident that she is not a person at all associated with the film.

Cina remains cool. "Was I doing something wrong?" she asks.

"You were too nice, sweetie," answers the woman. "You

should have been giving him the finger, or making a hand sign that told him, 'Hey, read between the lines.' That's what I told my old man before I moved out of the house two days ago."

Cina is about to respond, but before she can, the window of the motel office at the other end of the building swings open. Motel manager Cindy Martin leans out, a bruised-bear scowl on her round, normally pleasant face. "How many times have I told you to keep that door shut?" she screams. Saying not one further word, Cina's new-found acting coach retreats back into her room, quietly closing the door.

There is a long, embarrassing silence. "Can we do that one more time?" asks Cina.

Two or three takes later, Cina is getting a touch-up on a couple of realistic-looking black eyes. "I think in her own way she was just trying to help," says the tall, sultry-voiced actress. "What it is, I'm more than a little affected by this role I'm playing. Clara is the daughter of Vanessa, one of

the villains of the film. Vanessa is one of two sisters who are, among other things, cannibals. Clara was given up for adoption at a very young age, so she doesn't really know who her birth mother is, and then this Hollywood director, this animator, played by Alex, comes into her life, and offers her this job. They become impassioned and then her whole life falls apart, and I end up...dead."

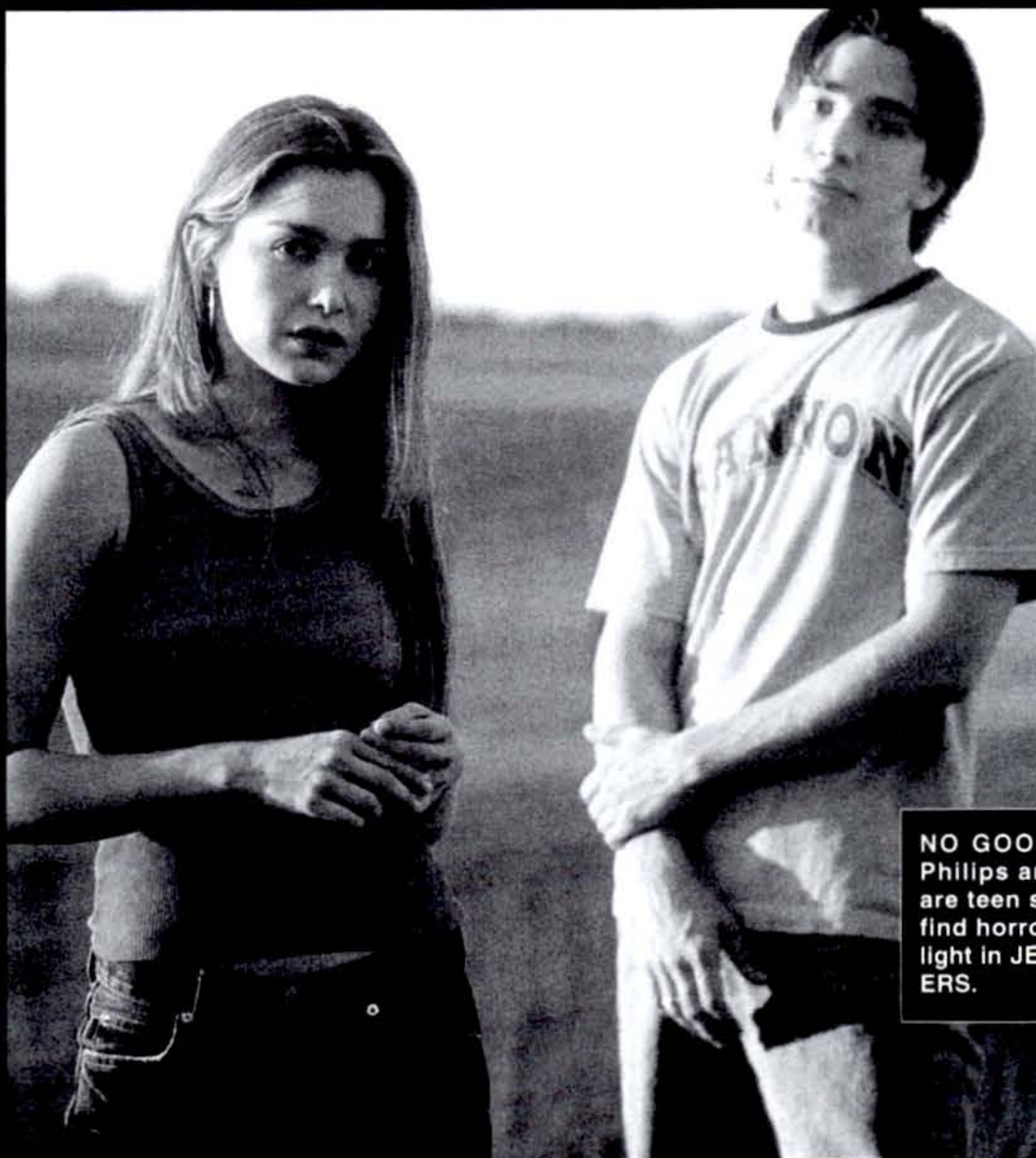
Cina tries to smile here, but it is obvious she is in the throes of a very unsettling emotional state. She takes a deep breath, and continues. "It's ironic that in acting classes you're taught how to get the job and how to get the part, and how to get into the character, but no one ever tells you how to get out of that part, out of that character. That is a process all to itself."

Is what Cina has been going through worth the ride? She doesn't answer right away, but returns a half-hearted, and somewhat stoic smile. "I don't know, really," she finally answers, "I hope so. I hope so. We'll see." **CFQ**

THIS MOOD WON'T LAST: Maria Cina, before fate throws her character into circumstances far beyond her comprehension in *SUSPENDED ANIMATION*.



The whimsical title of Victor Salva's new film, *JEEPERS CREEPERS*, usually associated with a spirited Johnny Mercer/Harry Warren song of the late '30's, might lull a prospective audience into thinking they are about to see a comedy/horror film in the vein of *SCARED STIFF* or *SATURDAY THE 14TH*. Not so. Released by MGM-UA, *JEEPERS CREEPERS* is perhaps one of the most frightening and wrenching thrillers to come along in many years. Two college students, Trish Jenner (Gina Philips) and her brother Darry (Justin Long) are motoring home for spring break. Along the way, they pass an abandoned church where a large man dressed in rags (Jonathan Breck) appears to be dumping several bloodied, sheet-wrapped corpses down a utility pipe. Unable to call the police due to a dead cell phone, and miles from the nearest pay phone, Darry insists that he and Trish go back and investigate, just in case one of the "corpses" is still alive. Against vehement objections from his sister, they return to the site. Darry descends into the pipe, and finds himself in the basement. As his eyes get used to the darkness he sees that the walls and ceiling are decorated with preserved human corpses, many of whom sport crude rawhide sutures. Fleeing this carnage, the Jenners discover that the "man" they saw dumping the bodies is actually a creature known as the Creeper. This monster makes an appearance on Earth every twenty-three years for twenty-three days looking for human organs to devour to keep himself alive — and now he has his choppers all readied for Trish and Darry. His attacks, the two youths learn, are always preceded by the paradoxically peppy strains of *Jeepers Creepers* ("Jeepers, Creepers/Where'd you get those peepers?"), usually received on somebody's car radio. With each successive atrocity, the Creeper becomes unaccountably more hideous and demonic, going from just a huge man to a steel-toothed vampire, to a misshapen gargoyle complete with a set of cartilaginous bat's wings.



NO GOOD DEED: Gina Philips and Justin Long are teen samaritans who find horror in broad daylight in *JEEPERS CREEPERS*.

"[That] was done on purpose," said the amiable, gently loquacious Salva. "I still don't know what he is, and I don't think the audience will know when they walk out of the theater, which I think is a wonderful thing. God knows I have fought for that, because studios like audi-

ences to be really satisfied. They feel that the satisfaction will be reflected at the box office, but I really had to fight for this mysterious creature, who people know so little about. They don't know any of his origins. They know a few words from this psychic [Jezelle Gay Hartman, played by Patricia Belcher] who dreamed about him, who said she didn't know if he was a demon or a devil or just some hungry 'thing' from some dark place in time. That was all I wanted to give, and

really, I think it's all that was needed.

"Call me crazy, but really, how many different tales do we need? I think there's something much more frightening about the unknown than there is about, 'Oh, he was an angel thrown down from God to Hell, and became a demon, and then he was hungry.' Once you explain something, it's not scary any more. I just really tried to keep the Creeper a mystery, to keep him changing, and to keep him interesting, and just keep him as something that an audience tries to figure out, but eventually doesn't know any more than they did when the story started."

Salva's return to the screen with so compelling an effort represents something of a personal victory for the frequently embattled director. In 1995, Caravan Pictures released *POWDER*, Salva's off-beat, haunting tale of a hairless, albino teenager who possesses both a super-genius intellect and astonishing, preternatural powers. So powerful was this story of innocence persecuted by fear and ignorance that, in initial screenings, it looked as if Salva was headed for instant fame. But it was not to be. Prior to the film's debut, it was revealed that in 1988 Salva had spent fifteen months in prison for sexually molesting a twelve-year-old boy. Upon his release, Salva had to legally register as a sex offender.

CRAPPIES

Is This Horror Film a Sleeper?



JEEPERS CREEPERS

JONATHAN BRECK

The Actor Steps Into Feature Films as a Homicidal Shapeshifter

By Mitch Persons

That boy paid his dues," said writer/director Victor Salva of actor Jonathan Breck. "He went through hell.

JEEPERS CREEPERS. Looking at Breck as the Creeper, he appears to be at least nine feet tall, with muscles in places that most people have never dreamed of. Although physically a large man (6 feet, 1 inch 195 pounds), Breck is nowhere near the colossal size that he appears on the screen.

When told how he manages to project this illusion of enormity, the Texas native laughed. "That's just perfect. That's exactly what we were trying to do there. That's why **JEEPERS CREEPERS** was such a great film to work on. Everybody was really putting their heart and soul into it, to make

it a really scary picture. It doesn't often happen, unfortunately,

GOURMET OF TERROR: Jonathan Breck as the Creeper, predator of the human species.

but [sometimes] you just get on a project and everybody realizes they're doing something great, and everybody just lays it on the line. It was that kind of film shoot. It was really fun to be a part of it."

Previously, Breck had done a lot of stage work, mostly in Los Angeles. He appeared in John Guare's **SIX DEGREES OF**

SEPARATION, Circle West's **THE GREAT-GREAT-GRAND-SON OF JUDITH I. KOHLER**, and a version of **STREAMERS** at The Hudson Theatre. His TV work has included **STAR TREK VOYAGER**, **VIP**, and the UPN movie **I MARRIED A MONSTER**.

"I just finished a film called **BEAT BOYS, BEAT GIRLS**, a really great film in which I played a beat poet who was kind of misplaced in today's society. I did another picture, **GOOD ADVICE**, with Charlie Sheen and Denise Richards, which was shot in the summer of 2000. Then I played a bad guy, a drug dealer in R. J. Thomas's **LEARNING TO SURF**. **JEEPERS CREEPERS**, though, was my very first monster role."

The scenes showing the Creeper ingesting intestines and livers are particularly graphic and unsettling, but the most frightening bit of business may be the Creeper's casual attitude towards a severed head. "Victor had written the framework for that scene," said Breck. "He is very collaborative with his actors, and he gave me a lot of freedom to decide how to play my character. But that particular scene he had written that I got out and whistled on my way to that man's head, and that gave me a great place from which to start. The Creeper, he's very casual about the way he does things, and he's very casual about eliciting a fear response from the kids."

Added Salva, "The Creeper is actually putting on a show at that point. The reason that the monster puts on the show is because he knows that if people aren't scared, he's not going to

be able to smell their inventory, which is one of the ways he tracks down his victims. He has various ways of scaring people. He tries to run them off the road in this monster truck. When he runs down roads in his truck and honks like crazy at people, he is trying to get a sense of whether or not there's someone in that car that has a part that he needs, and whether or not it smells good to him. He performs. He is performing for Darry and Trish when they see him amble over to that severed head. He knows they're watching him pick it up. He knows they're watching him whistle, and I think he's doing it just because he wants to smell their fear.

"Jonathan and I had a long discussion where I said, 'Look, I don't think this guy is evil.' Jonathan looked at me like I was crazy, but then I said, 'No, look: you and I, we eat dead things every day. That's how we survive. That's how nature has set up this food chain. I don't think the Creeper goes around gleefully looking for people to murder.' I think that he has done this for so long that he looks at people like we would look at a herd of cows, and thinks, *Hey, there's a hamburger, there's a steak.*"

Breck pretty much concurred. "I think it was very important to portray the Creeper with a certain touch of humanism, something that we could all connect with. I think that does make him much scarier. If he was just some evil enigma out there that nobody knew about and nobody could relate to, I don't think **JEEPERS CREEPERS** would be nearly as chilling."

CFQ

We were shooting in central Florida when a freak heat wave hit—drove the temperature up to 110 degrees. I'm impressed that Jonathan could make it through. He didn't just make it through, he gave the creature a personality which was terrific."

The "creature" that Salva is referring to is a shapeshifting cannibal known as the Creeper, and he figures prominently in the new MGM/UA thriller,

In theory, with Salva having, as the saying goes, "paid his debt to society," the matter should have been put to rest. But the victim's family, and a press ready to run with what it felt was a hot story, weren't quite ready to let go of the past, especially since Caravan Pictures was a Disney company. According to a San Francisco Examiner article dated October 25, 1995, "Salva's work with Caravan could prove embarrassing for Disney, whose theme parks, animated characters and popular cartoon videos have cemented its reputation for wholesome family fun for more than six decades." Whether this embarrassment hampered the studio's reputation is a moot point. *POWDER* did garner some critical and financial success, but Salva, who went on to make the indie *rites of passage* (1999) never worked for Disney again.

JEEPERS CREEPERS is Salva's return to writing and directing for a major studio. Produced under the aegis of none other than Francis Ford Coppola, *JEEPERS CREEPERS* may even surpass *POWDER* in intensity and public acceptance.

The germ of Salva's story started during "the summer of *THE SIXTH SENSE* and *BLAIR WITCH PROJECT*, both of which I loved a lot. I stepped out into the sunlight from these movies, and I said, 'God, these are like the movies I used to make when I was in high school. How come I can't make a monster movie?'"

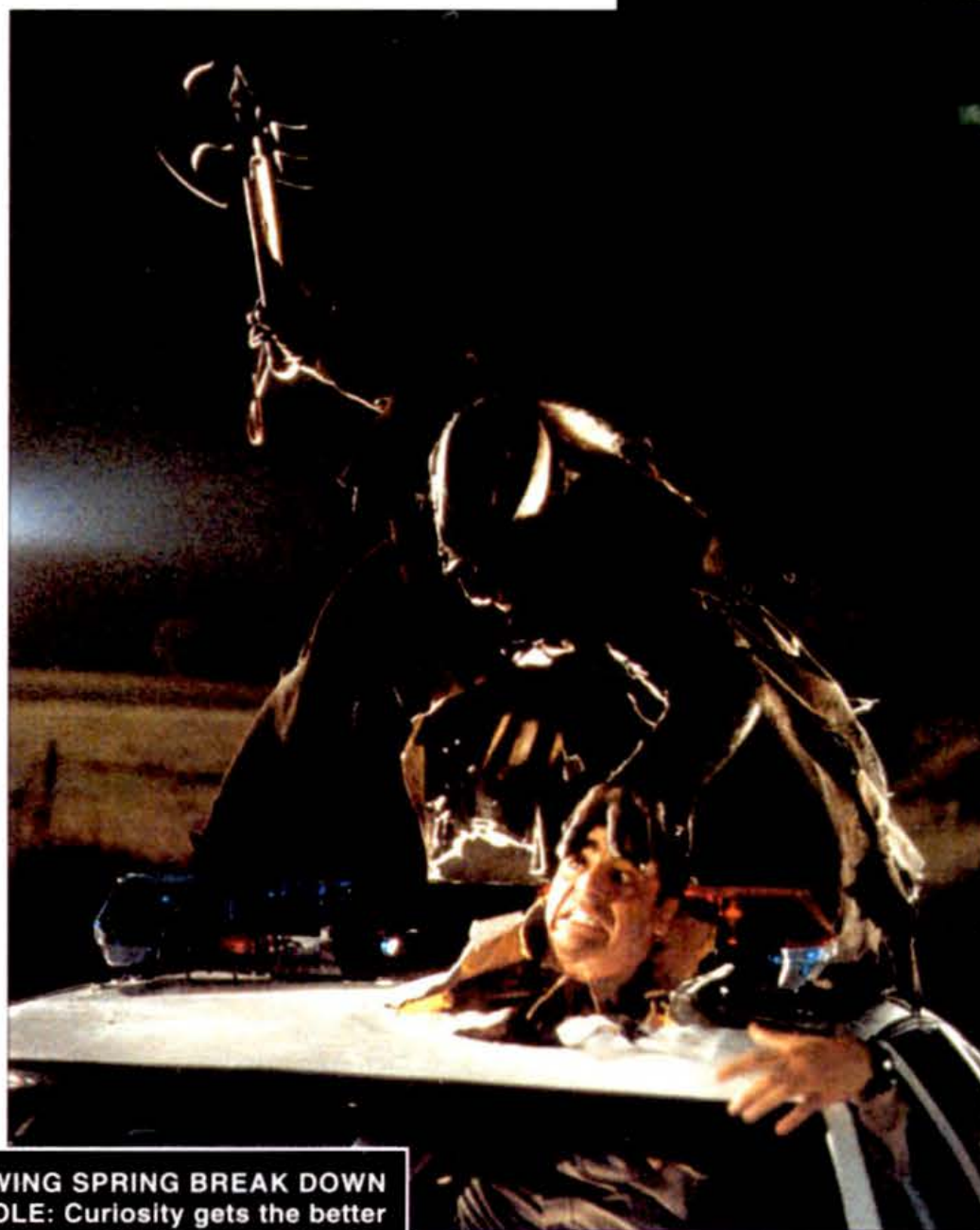
"Knowing that *THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT* and *THE SIXTH SENSE* were such huge hits, and the studios would be looking for a horror film, I gave myself permission to sort of become a youngster once again and write a story that I thought would be scary enough to scare me, the writer. Initially I knew that I wanted a creature, and I knew I wanted him to keep evolving throughout the story, so he couldn't be second-guessed. The audience would just keep discovering more and more about him."

Apparently, from that point on, the ideas just kept rolling in — and they were not traditional horror film ideas. "I wanted," Salva continued, "the initial action to take place in broad daylight, in a rural setting. I thought by bathing the exposition in sleepy, warm hues, it would heighten the horror when the Creeper makes his appearance."

"I just basically put together the things in my consciousness that I saw that would be a good element for a film. Normally, it takes me a good year to write a script, but because I was so hyped by it, *JEEPERS CREEPERS* came pour-

ing out in only four weeks."

Those four weeks produced some profoundly disturbing images, including one decapitation, some graphic scenes of cannibalism, and the bizarre elimination of a feline-loving recluse known as the Cat Lady (Eileen Brennan.) "Oddly enough," continued Salva, "preview audiences could take those scenes and accept them. The one part of the movie they had trouble with was one which I actually took from real life,



THROWING SPRING BREAK DOWN THE HOLE: Curiosity gets the better of two teens, and brings them into the clutches of the Creeper (Jonathan Breck, above), a supernatural killer with a voracious appetite.

The very first part of the story — where the brother and sister see this man throwing something down a pipe — that part of the story is actually a true story that I was told, only it was an elderly couple, and they went back to this pipe to see what he was throwing down there. I thought that was a tremendously brave thing to do, but I also remember, when I heard it, thinking, *Boy, if that was a movie, if they went back, I would be on the edge of my seat; I would be scared to death for them.*

"I love the idea that Darry is pretending the reason he wants to go back is about conscience, and Trish keeps saying, 'No, it's about you wanting to see something gross,' but when he hits on, 'Well, what if it was you back there,' I think it personalizes it enough for both of them that it really makes sense. 'Okay, we'll just go

back and look down the pipe, and that's it. We're gonna just look down the pipe.' That's the credibility factor, the problem that most people have with the movie, and I found it really ironic that out of the whole movie, that is the one thing that I didn't make up."

"We worked hard to find kids who were going to be having reactions to this stuff as if it was really happening, not happening in a horror movie, but happening in real life."

What happens in the film is something that is as far removed from reality as possible. The Creeper *does* appear to triumph, though, a factor which could lead the way to *JEEPERS CREEPERS II*. "There is an irony there," Salva confided. "Usually my scripts have to get passed on by every studio in town twice before I even get a chance at getting one set up, but with this one, [they responded] immediately. When I realized that the market was really hungry for this kind of thing, I didn't want

JEEPERS CREEPERS to turn into a 'Freddy' series, or a 'Michael Myers' series, or anything."

"I thought that if I put the legend of my creature to state that he only comes out every twenty-three years to do this for twenty-three days, then they couldn't possibly make a sequel out of it... I kept saying, 'Well, look, I already sequel-proofed it.' And then it was explained to me — I'm not sure if it was Francis [Ford Coppola] or not — but someone explained to me that, no, the sequel could pick up right where the last one left off. We don't know if these were the first two days of the twenty-three days, or what. The producers certainly are hoping that this thing hits, so they're negotiating with me to write and direct a sequel, but it was never intended that way. I don't think anyone will ever believe that, though."

"I thought I was being so clever."

CFO

By Dan Scapperotti

The Feds have their MEN IN BLACK. Chicago has its SPECIAL UNIT 2. And common citizens, your average, everyday, COPS-watching, trailer-park inhabiting, people on the street, well, they have that paragon of journalistic integrity, that bastion of the fourth estate: the super market tabloid. We just don't believe them.

In July, the Sci Fi Channel unveiled how little we know about what actually goes on in the offices of those who document the world of two-headed babies and satanically possessed toilet bowls when they launched the new series, THE CHRONICLE. Chad Willett stars as Tucker Burns, a would-be journalist who finds himself at the bottom of the barrel of his chosen profession and in a world he never imagined.

The series was the brain child of creator and executive producer Silvio Horta, a Miami native who graduated from NYU before deciding to seek his fortune in the movie business. After moving to Los Angeles, Horta came up with the idea for a horror movie that

TRUST US, YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHY THIS GUY'S SMILING: Rena Sofer plays an alien abductee seeking vindication from THE CHRONICLE.



NEWS FROM THE EDGE

Chronicle



ON SCI FI

PH: RAFAEL FUCHS

eventually became URBAN LEGEND, then turned his attention to a series of books called *News From the Edge*, about a St. Louis newspaper that reports on strange occurrences. "I thought the books were what our series is," Horta

explained, "But they were more like Scooby Doo. There aren't really aliens or monsters. I wanted to do something different. A fascinating aspect of the tabloids is: What if these stories are real? What if these things, these cheesy pictures that you just laugh off, were real? What if we were unaware of a whole other reality underneath ours? There is so much on television that is very dour science fiction—you know: *The Truth is Out There*. It's all so

morbid.

"I always intended for the show to be the opposite of that. I wanted it to be the anti-X-FILES. We've already established that the truth is out there. Let's have some fun with it."

Giving his own spin to the books, Horta wrote a one-hour pilot for a TV series. Robert Greenblatt and David Janollari, the honchos behind the San Diego-based Greenblatt Janollari Studios, agreed to produce the pilot. NBC expressed interest, but was only paying for a half-hour presentation. Horta quickly revised his original script to fit the shorter format, and shot it for the network.

While NBC eventually passed on the series, the Sci Fi Channel picked it up for an initial run of thirteen episodes, suggesting some thematic changes. "When we moved from NBC to Sci Fi we got a license to do more science fiction stories," said Robert Greenblatt. "Over at NBC it was more comedy-oriented. Sci Fi wants us to delve into the more fun science fiction angles. It's pretty much the same show."

As established during the first show, Tucker Burns was a shining star at Columbia's School of Journalism, picking

up a student Pulitzer for a story he wrote, only to have it snatched away when it was discovered the story wasn't true. Shunned by the "legitimate" press, he winds up at the *Chronicle*, a super-market tab based in a run-down warehouse that, despite outward appearances, actually conceals a high-tech, and high-octane, news operation. Turns out that, according to publisher Donald Stern (Jon Polito), everything in his paper is real. People just choose not to believe it.

In the original pilot, Tucker goes on to discover the wonders both within and without the *Chronicle's* walls. Stern takes his new reporter into the bowels of the building, where the *Chronicle* houses its vast archives. There he meets Pig Boy, an urban legend come to life and proprietor of the newspaper's records. Next, he's introduced to Grace Antonini, the *Chronicle's* ace reporter. Without formal training in journalism, Antonini brings her own credentials to this job: she was a multiple abductee. Aliens!

Beautiful Emmy Award winner Rena Sofer was cast as Antonelli, changed to "Hall" when the show went to series. "We changed her last name in the series from 'Antonini' because of legal problems," said Greenblatt. "What brought Grace to the paper was that she found a kindred spirit there. It was the one place where people would believe that she was abducted. Tucker and Grace come to this reporting from two very different places. She is not a trained journalist; she only came to this place because of her background with alien abductions. Although she has ultimately become a really good reporter, she is more interested in what's going on and helping the people like her who are often not taken seriously about the stuff that happens to them. Tucker's always looking for the who, what, when, why. He's the dyed-in-the-wool journalist. They have a little bit of friction about how they go about reporting on their stories, but ultimately they end

All That Crazy Stuff in the Tabloids? It's True. But You've Got to Know Where to Look.

up having a pretty good rapport."

Rounding out the team is Reno Wilson as street-wise photographer Wes Freewald. "Reno Wilson is great," said Greenblatt. "He's a lot of fun and his character loves this world of sci-fi, weird, occult stuff. He gets really excited by it all. Where the Grace character is more jaded—she's seen it all—and Tucker is more disbelieving of it, Wes just loves it."

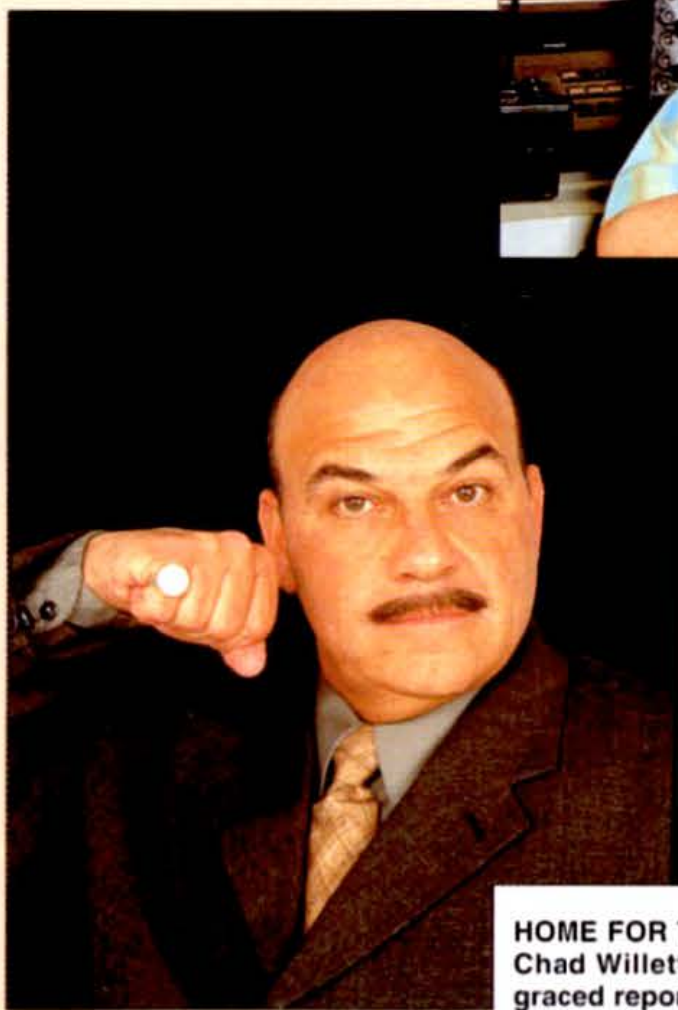
The cast remained the same when the show went to series, with the exception of Pig Boy. "Pig Boy was originally played by a young actor named Patrick Renna," said Horta. "We decided to go with someone older and quirkier, so we hired Curtis Armstrong," the actor mainly remembered for his roles as Booger in *REVENGE OF THE NERDS* and Herbert Viola on *MOONLIGHTING*. "We reconceived the character a little. In the pilot, he was heavily made up. The prosthetics were a little too much, so we pared them down. He's such a great actor that you don't need that much makeup to get this part."

For executive producer Gina Matthews, who also produced *URBAN LEGEND* and *WHAT WOMEN WANT*, the big challenge on *CHRONICLE* was maintaining the tone of the show. "There's nothing like it on television," she said. "BUFFY would be the closest thing. We wanted the kind of tone that would be scary and funny. Silvio wrote an extraordinary script; the challenge was making sure that translated onto the screen. We had to make sure that this was not a parody. It's not high camp. It has to be played really real, because what makes it funny is all the throw-aways, all the dialogue, all the stuff that Silvio does so well. The characters had to believe what they were doing. That was the big challenge."

"As a producer you always have to make sure that every person involved, whether it's the writers, the director, the actors, the guest cast, every single person working on the show understands the tone."

Horta also oversees the writ-

ing staff of four scribes. He has penned three of the episodes himself, including the pilot about an alien, headlined the "Brooklyn Blood Sucker," and "Baby Got Back," about a demon baby whose soul is sold to an Amway-like cor-



HOME FOR THE FRINGE: Chad Willett plays a disgraced reporter seeking a second chance; Curtis Armstrong is Pig Boy, master archivist (top). **LEFT:** The legendary Jon Polito appears as the publisher who seeks to inform the world about the News from the Edge.

poration. This is fantasy?

In developing the titles for each show, Horta and company have taken a quirky look at titles and catch phrases inspired by recent genre films. The wildly exploitative titles become the headlines for the articles featured in that edition of the *Chronicle*. The second show to air will be their *TREMORS* episode, with a titular nod to last summer's Harrison Ford horror film. "What Gobbles Beneath" focuses on a cancerous tumor monster living underneath the streets of Manhattan. Attracted by radiation, the wily creature attacks people who use cell phones—a public service, perhaps.

When the pilot went to series, the look of the subterranean archives was reconceived. "What we have now is a lot cooler," said Horta. "We have a central archive space kind of like the Bat Cave. It's built in these caves with pipes and pneumatic tubes coming in from everywhere. Its kind of a



mixture of old equipment like eight tracks that Pig Boy has managed to make use of, along with futuristic, high-tech computer stuff. There's a door alongside this room that leads to these vast storage spaces. The main area is Pig Boy's workstation. That's the big difference in the look of the show."

The reality of television production, especially on a basic cable network, is that it must work on a restricted budget. "It's tough to do great visual effects on a budget," Horta admitted. "You go in with very ambitious ideas, and the reality for television is that you have to really trim it back and think, *How can we use such things as our standing sets to the best advantage?* Some [episodes] are more ambitious and require more money, so we'll take some funds out of other episodes that are less ambitious and are simpler. We have our episode that is set in and around a haunted house. We have our ghosts, but we wanted to play a little along the *SIXTH SENSE* line where they appear sort-of real. So we're able to have a great story there and save money on special effects and locations. Then we have an episode where appliances start coming to life and are killing people. There are a

lot of effects, a lot of locations in that one, so we spread the resources around and make everything work."

With a kind of monster-of-the-week format reminiscent of *KOLCHAK*, *THE NIGHT STALKER*, *CHRONICLE* is developing a stable of creatures that may return in later shows. "As we develop these stories, we think about the monsters and aliens that we like that may be fun to revisit," Horta explained. "I see a mythology sort of starting to build, but I think it's growing organically from the story that we develop and the characters we are creating."

"What is exciting about the *Weekly World News* is that it can be anything," added Gina Matthews. "It can be a demon in my toilet that won't let me flush. We had the luxury of having an episode with an oven in a restaurant that is possessed, and it's a portal to your deepest, darkest secrets. We have aliens, ghosts, and demons. Whatever it is, it will always be subverted. That's what's great about being on the Sci Fi Channel, because their audiences are really, really smart, and we're working with executives who know what they're doing. We want to take the genre and take the familiar and turn it on its head and make it seem fresh to the people who are watching the show."

"It's such a fun ride both at being funny and being scary and subversive. We're hoping that when people watch the show, they'll be attracted to how fresh it feels, whether they're huge sci-fi fans or not. We're hoping it will broaden the audience."

CFO

ENTERPRISE

The TREK Franchise Seeks to Reinvigorate Itself With a Trip Back to the Start of Future History

By Anna L. Kaplan

Coming to your television screen this fall: ENTERPRISE, the fifth STAR TREK series. With a premiere date of September 26th at 8PM on UPN, the pilot, "Broken Bow," promises to set up a TREK world 150 years in our future, and 100 years before Captain Kirk's first five year mission. ENTERPRISE will focus on humanity's early travels into deep space and the events that lead up, eventually, to the founding of the Federation. Captained by Jonathan Archer, (Scott Bakula), the Enterprise NX-01—first of a proud lineage—will truly go where no one has gone before.

In the STAR TREK feature film FIRST CONTACT, which

was written by Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore, Zephram Cochrane (James Cromwell) made the first warp-engine-powered space flight, prompting first contact with the Vulcans, who detected the warp signature. Some one hundred years after this momentous event, a Klingon ship crashes on Earth. A nascent Starfleet decides to return the Klingon to his home, and brings together a crew on Captain Archer's ship to make the journey. It is humanity's time to venture into space, in the first ship that can reach warp five.

The diversity of this assembled group is vital to ENTERPRISE's drama, since it brings the potential for something that was sad-

ly lacking in some other TREK series: conflict. High profile participants in these first missions include the Vulcan, T'Pol (Jolene Blalock), who has more experience with other species than the human crew and thus is assigned the daunting task of working with the occasionally fractious Earthlings; chief engineer Charles "Trip" Tucker (Connor Trinneer), second-ranking human on the ship, and a friend of Captain Archer; communications officer Hoshi Sato (Linda Park), a linguist vital in these days before the universal translator; helmsman Travis Mayweather (Anthony Montgomery), who was actual-

ly born in space and has traveled all over on freighters and transport vessels; the alien

engineer that I think could really work well. People are very unfamiliar and uncomfortable with alien species. The technology is still in its nascent stage—things break down. There aren't a lot of rules and regulations governing the ways in which we interact with other societies. I hope that it's messy, and that we muck up and that we make mistakes, and that we stumble around a bit, and that some of the tensions that exist between the individual crew members are exacerbated because of that. I think that they are very aware of the fact that, for this show to really stand out from some of the more recent incarnations of STAR TREK, we have to get back to it being a kind of wow-no-one's-ever-done-this-before-I-don't-know-what-the-hell-to-do-next flavor."

Dr. Phlox (John Billingsley); and British-born munitions officer Malcolm Reed (Dominic Keating). Complicating this first mission is the arrival of the Suliban, aggressive aliens with a mysterious agenda.

Said Billingsley, who plays the only alien aboard besides T'Pol, "I would say that what this show might be offering that some of the [previous] shows have not is a greater potential for real fireworks between members of the cast. There is a tension between T'Pol and the Captain and the en-

Billingsley's Dr. Phlox is a member of a species participating in what is called, "The Interspecies Medical Exchange Program." He explained, "The Vulcans have been on Earth now for a hundred years or so, and they have been doling out in dribs and drabs the technology that we need to get out into space. They don't think earthlings are ready yet. They have introduced a few other species to [humans], but very few. I am a representative of one of the cultures that the Vulcans consider capable of handling these kind of crazy and potentially dangerous Earthlings. I have probably been on Earth for, my own thinking, maybe nine months to a year before the events of the pilot."

LOVE ME, LOVE MY SPACESUIT: More functional costuming promises a happier cast.



Berman and Braga have indicated that ENTERPRISE will definitely have more of the "wow" factor. The crew members will be more relaxed, with more of a sense of playfulness than some of the other TREK series. The uniforms, for example, are closer to NASA jumpsuits than to the tight and uncomfortable costumes worn by the actors in TNG, DS9, and VOYAGER. There will be more humor in ENTERPRISE, as well as more sexuality.

TREK fans have been worried that ENTERPRISE will not be able to avoid errors in continuity. For many reasons, though, such errors are practically unavoidable. Events described in the original series that should have already happened, such as the Eugenics War, clearly have not. Technology has progressed in different ways—present-day cell phones are smaller than the original series' "futuristic" communicators; flat-screen video displays are available for delivery at your local Circuit City (neural neutralizers, however, remain mercifully out-of-reach). The ship in this show, and its technology, must somehow reflect both the reality of what we already know, as well as the "reality" of TREK canon.

Many TREK veterans have been involved in developing the look of the new ship and the new series. Herman Zimmerman, who previously worked on THE NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE NINE, as well as the last five feature films, returns as production designer. John Eaves is the senior illustrator, back from DS9 and the last three movies. The interiors of this new-old Enterprise have a distinct look, dressed in beige tones and scaled more like a submarine or the current space shuttle. "[The] sets will blow you away," said Braga. "The best sets ever."

As he did for TNG and VOYAGER, Ronald B. Moore will continue supervising visual effects, primary among them an NX-01 that will likely be an all-CG ship, as opposed to the other Enterprises.

Other TREK veterans working on ENTERPRISE include

producers Merri D. Howard and Brad Jacobian, and director of photography Marvin V. Rush. Michael Okuda, author of "The STAR TREK Chronology" and "The STAR TREK Encyclopedia," among other books, returns as scenic arts supervisor.

Michael Westmore will once again be designing the makeup. The Klingons seen in the first episode will look like the Klingons from TNG, as well as the feature films, ridges and all. For Dr. Phlox, Westmore strove to create a makeup that would be wearable and usable over the life of the show. In the past, actors playing Ferengi and Talaxians, for example, have suffered in their prosthetics. Said Billingsley about his makeup, "It's really not too bad. I understand that some of the people in the past have had to go through these four-and-a-



SUDDEN LAUNCH: A wounded Klingon (above) spurs humanity's first venture into the universe. **LEFT:** Jolene Blalock as the Vulcan T'Pol.

half-hour makeup jobs where they are encased in an entire head. They've been the ones who have really had to suffer. The more people I talk to, the more I realize that I am really coming off very lucky."

Veteran TREK directors will put their stamp on upcoming episodes. James Conway will helm the pilot, written by Berman and Braga. Subsequent episodes will be directed by Allan Kroeker and David Livingston. Actors who have worked on TREK in front of and behind the camera will be returning to direct the series, including TNG's LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge) and VOYAGER's Roxann Dawson (B'Elanna Torres) and Robert Duncan McNeill (Tom Paris).



Only some of the writing staff is familiar. From VOY-

A G E R come Andre Bormanis and the team of Mike Sussman and Phyllis Strong.

Stephen Beck wrote previously for the UPN series SEVEN DAYS. Other writers include Antoinette Stella, Fred Dekker, Maria and Andre Jacquemetton, and Tim Finch.

The success of the Enterprise in its first mission leads the crew to many more adventures. Explained Billingsley, "This first flight into space is supposed to be a short-term run. It goes well enough, after a number of complications, for the powers-that-be on Earth to essentially say, 'You know, we are ready.' In effect, they actually countermand the Vulcans and say, 'We appreciate all your

help, but now it's our time.' So off we go, and that strain between the Vulcans and the Earthlings is now mirrored in the relationship between the Captain and T'Pol on the ship."

The casting of Scott Bakula as Captain Jonathan Archer drew praise from just about every quarter. Bakula already has a genre following of "Leapers" from his years as Dr. Sam Beckett on QUANTUM LEAP. Bakula gave ENTER-TAINMENT TONIGHT the first tour of the Enterprise, and has been prominent in publicity surrounding the launch of the show. Commented Michael Piller, who helped create both DS9 and VOYAGER, "I think Scott Bakula is extremely likeable. It's the first time that a television star who has been on a successful series has been asked to captain the ship. I think that represents a certain insurance policy for the new series, to make sure that the anchor is a strong personality that people relate to."

CFQ

ENTERPRISE

Scott Bakula

The Man Who Made the Quantum Leap Readies Himself for Warp Jumps

By Gregory L. Norris and
Laura A. Van Fleet

At the tail end of our interview, new ENTERPRISE captain Scott Bakula turned the microphone around, aiming it at us. "I'd like to ask you guys a question because you're very much in the loop here," he said. "Some people have said, 'Why do you think they rushed to do ENTERPRISE, and do you think it's too soon, that STAR TREK fans needed a year off after the

end of VOYAGER?' What do you think about that?"

We mentioned the cryptic and enticing ads for ENTERPRISE that ran during VOYAGER's summer repeats and the buzz of activity on Internet chat sites and message boards, all seeming to indicate a level of renewed interest in the venerable franchise not seen since VOYAGER's launch at the height of the STAR TREK craze seven years ago.

"Thanks," Bakula replied, exhaling a sigh of relief. "That makes me feel much better. I

just want to make sure we get this thing right."

After thirty minutes spent picking the brain of the soft-spoken journeyman actor who recently assumed the captain's chair—and the mantle of the entire STAR TREK universe upon his shoulders—one thing is for sure: Scott Bakula cares deeply about the success of the next seven years.

"A lot of time, you start something new and you know what it's going to be. You have a sense of it, but you don't really

know how it's going to be received," continued Bakula, who, until his casting in the fifth TREK live-action series, was best known to sci-

ence fiction fans for his five-year stint as loveable time-traveler Samuel Beckett on the cult classic, QUANTUM LEAP. "We have a great sense of this show's potential. So even before we got started, I had this feeling of the need to be ready to step up from the get-go, knowing that people are going to be watching.

"It just adds a little more weight and importance to almost everything you do, because there is the sense that you're being scrutinized. Certainly, being held up against the previous STAR TREK captains adds a color to this that is unusual in the terms of approaching any kind of a role, unless you are doing HAMLET and you're the 875th person to play it," the forty-something actor noted. "This definitely has a

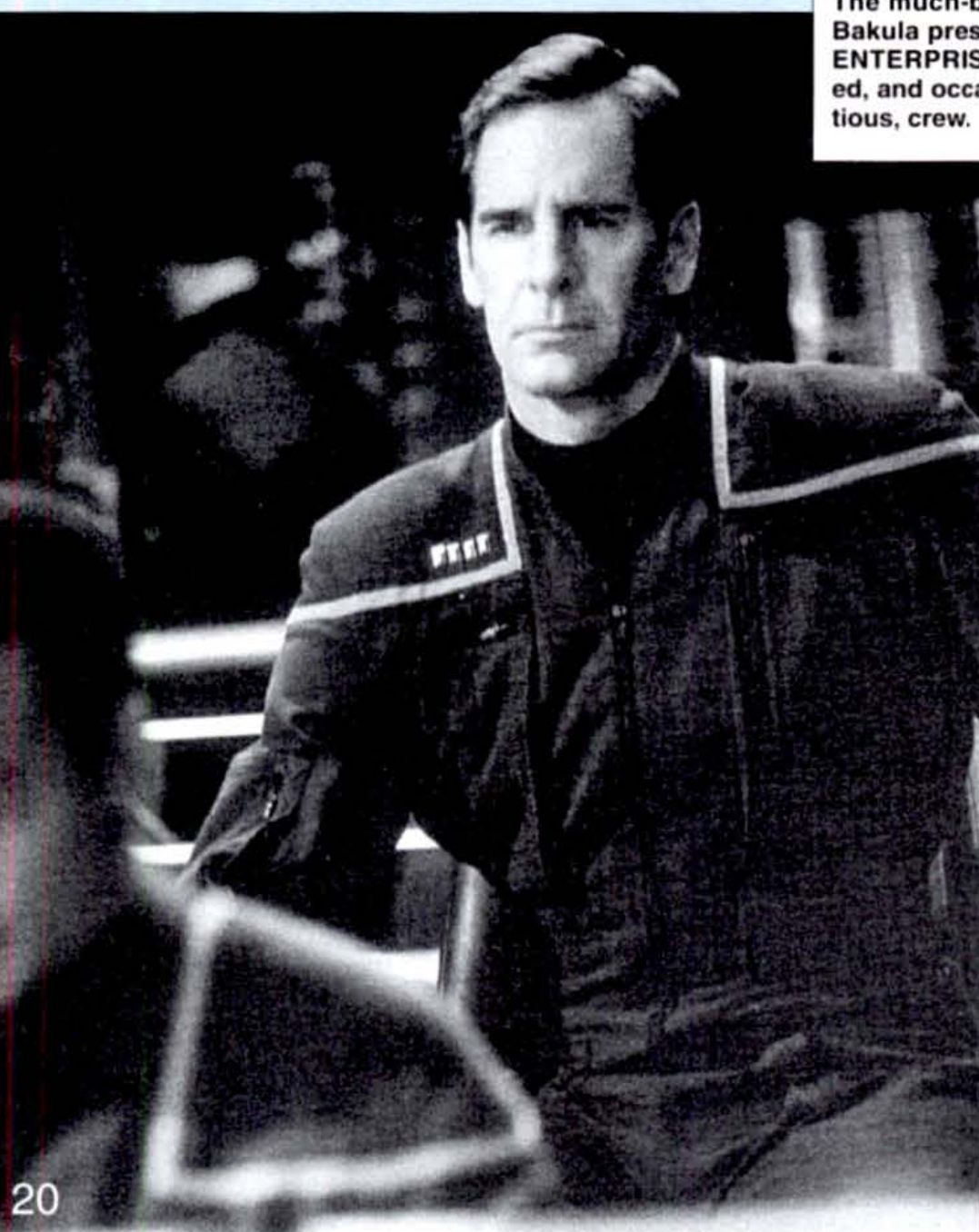
history that is unprecedented. It's exciting, and there is a certain responsibility that comes with it.

"In ENTERPRISE, we're the pioneers. We're the frontiersmen in the Wild West. What the powers-that-be have tried to set up initially is that we're not up to speed on this new starship. Everything doesn't work perfectly, so we are still getting out a lot of the bugs and there's some frustration involved with that. My character is a man who is basically a 'Starfleet brat.' He's grown up in the system, and for his whole life his dream has been to get out there and explore and discover and make contact and do all those things. When it happens, it's just not the way he imagined it.

"At this point, we are not dropping onto a wonderful new planet every week on cue. There's a lot more flying by the seat of the pants and a kind of unexpectedness about the early episodes right now, which I think is going to be a lot of fun for the audience. There is nothing routine about what the crew of ENTERPRISE is trying to do here, because it's all new. So there is great excitement and great tension, but it's great fun to play and lends a different look to the series from its predecessors."

Described as being more in the vein of William Shatner's James T. Kirk—the first man to captain an Enterprise starship in the Classic TREK of the 1960s—the role of Jonathan Archer hooked Bakula instantly. "His role, as written, is certainly a

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES?
The much-beloved Scott Bakula presides over the ENTERPRISE's variegated, and occasionally fractious, crew.



change of pace from other captains in the past. He's emotional, a heart-on-his-sleeve kind of guy who's brash in the face of authority at times, and not afraid to say what he thinks. And I just thought if I was approaching this character over the course of several years, as *TREK* series go on for, that I'd want as many character flaws and variables and anything the audience would find emotionally interesting. Archer has a life on earth, and a history. He has those kinds of foibles that the writers will be able to draw on and keep things fresh to move his character forward throughout the series."

Early into the birth of *ENTERPRISE*, Archer's name was modified, from Jackson to Jonathan. As Bakula explained, "It was just a clearance thing, something that happens all the time. Apparently, when the producers checked, there is one Jackson Archer living in the country, and if there is one, you can't use the name. But if there are twenty or more people with the name, like Jonathan Archer, you can. It's as boring and simple as that."

According to *ENTERPRISE* co-creator Brannon Braga, Bakula was the first—and only—choice to play Captain Archer when casting for the new series kicked off last May. "A number of things sold us on Scott," recalled Braga. "Foremost, it's his ambience. Captain Archer is a very Chuck Yeager-like explorer. He's laid back, the kind of guy you'd feel comfortable having a beer and a laugh with, and yet he's very strong and heroic as well. Scott Bakula is very much like that."

"He exudes that vibe. He's a very good actor, he's handsome, and science fiction fans know him. But there's also something else, in that Captain Archer is the kind of leader you'd want to feel comfortable with. What's great is that the audience already feels comfortable with Scott Bakula, the actor. He's a familiar face, and he's likeable. So that's perfect for the character, because when you tune in you feel like, on some subconscious level, you already know Archer."

For Bakula, whose roles have run the gamut from a gay

neighbor in 1999's *AMERICAN BEAUTY* to a down-on-his-luck jock in *MAJOR LEAGUE: BACK TO THE MINORS*, science fiction remains a comfortable and welcome home. In addition to his stint on *QUANTUM LEAP*, which earned him three Emmy Award nominations and a Golden Globe, Bakula's resume includes several genre standouts, including the Fox miniseries, *THE INVADERS* and Clive Barker's gory *LORD OF ILLUSIONS*.

Said Bakula, "Science fiction has been a big part of my life for years now. I loved it as a kid. I loved reading it and watching it, and it's kind of ironic that a lot of the sci-fi work has come my way as an adult. But I suppose when you are attracted to something that often you attract it back. I've always had a very active imagination, and there's nothing I would like to believe in more than that a lot of things in *ENTERPRISE* are going to be true in my lifetime. Because this *STAR TREK* series is only 150 years away, there's a big part of me that would like to believe that we are going to be able to achieve what's happening in the series at some point. Now, whether the results will be the same, and folks will be out there flying around in space and [en]countering all the wonderful things that we get to meet up with, I'm not sure about that. But I would like to believe so, and my feelings since I started on *ENTERPRISE* have reaffirmed and re-excited me about the possibilities. That's what has always been so appealing about this franchise, its hopefulness, and the thread of reality in it."

Joining Bakula's Archer on the *ENTERPRISE* bridge is newcomer Linda Park as reluctant Communications Officer and linguistics expert Hoshi Sato. For Park, the opportunity to learn from Bakula has thus far proven to be priceless. "He is such a good role model for me," said the actress. "Being that *ENTERPRISE* is my first series, there's so much I need to learn. Working with Scott is like grad school in a way. Not only does he know his stuff as an actor, but what's great about him

is that he looks out for everybody else, from the lighting guys to the director of photography to all of us in the cast. He is really helpful at getting to the set and making things work. He'll get down and pick up a hammer if he has to. He's so giving, generous and humble, not only as a person, but as a

REALLY NEW TREK: From left to right, Linda Park, Connor Trinneer, and Jolene Blalock are among the first to venture out on Earth's first starship (although here they seem to be sharing a *MONKEES* moment).



really shown me what type of attitude is the right kind to have."

Since his *QUANTUM LEAP* days, Bakula has also earned a reputation for being accessible to his fans, something likely to endear him even more to *STAR TREK* faithfuls. "I've had a great relationship with my fans in the past," he said. "It's going to be interesting to see how different it is going to be now that I'm on *ENTERPRISE*. I've known people in past *STAR TREK* shows, and everybody has an opinion about the fans. I don't think fans of *STAR TREK*, worldwide, are a lot different from *QUANTUM LEAP* fans, except that there are more of them because the franchise has been around for a much longer time. So I am excited about the fans and curious about their reactions. And at the same time I'm really trying to spend my energies and my time focusing on trying to make this new leg of the franchise as great as we possibly can for them."

The hard work being put into *ENTERPRISE* by Bakula will likely pay off for the *STAR TREK* Universe, whose last two

star.
He's

spin-offs, *DEEP SPACE 9* and *VOYAGER*, saw ratings decline sharply after enormous debut numbers, their audiences partly eroded by the popularity of other successful franchises, such as *THE X-FILES*, *BABYLON 5*, and the rebirth of *STAR WARS* in theaters.

"I don't feel like the *STAR TREK* franchise is in jeopardy," said Bakula. "They've had so much success, and they are getting ready to make the next movie [*STAR TREK: NEMESIS*]. But certainly I know the studio has a lot riding on *ENTERPRISE*, that this has been in the works for few years. They spent a fortune on this pilot, and the goal is to have people come and watch. And we certainly are trying to get a larger audience on Wednesday nights, and new audiences, and again I hope that is something I can help bring to the table by attracting new viewers to the show."

"Starting this series out at the beginning is going to allow people to keep putting the word out, that you don't need to have seen the last seven or fourteen years of *STAR TREK* to enjoy *ENTERPRISE*, and enjoy it, I hope they will."

CFQ

THE BIG RETURN

STAR TREK: VOYAGER's Final, Two-Year Mission? To Boldly Tie Up Loose Ends.

By Anna L. Kaplan

It had been a grueling trip home, and in 1999, the going only became harder. As STAR TREK: VOYAGER entered its sixth season, the television show faced a new and somewhat difficult set of circumstances. For the first time, continuing into

flame, had worked on his 500th hour of post-"classic" series TREK television. Berman and executive producer Brannon Braga would spend a portion of their time during VOYAGER's sixth season developing ideas for the next TREK series. By the seventh season, Braga had relinquished control of the writing staff to executive producer Kenneth Biller, who was at the helm for VOYAGER's last year. There were many changes in the writing/producing staff to begin both seasons, and these changes were at times fractious.

In the background, parent company Viacom and the UPN network faced many legal hurdles, as Viacom merged with CBS and questions were raised about the legality of the merged group's ownership of UPN. In the end, Viacom was allowed to keep UPN, and VOYAGER would finish its seven-year run on the mini-web. As the end loomed ever closer, the question of how and when the titular ship would return to Earth was prominent in the minds of viewers and those working on the show. In the end, the answer to that question could never please everyone.

SEASON SIX: WHERE DO YOU GO FROM UP?

VOYAGER's fifth season, carried by the vision of executive producer Brannon Braga, was felt by many to be its best. Season six brought many changes to the show.

Berman and Braga, looking forward to the following year and significant time spent developing TREK V for television, needed another executive producer for season six and, ultimately, a person to head the writing staff for season seven. With this in mind, and hoping for a transfusion of new ideas, veteran TREK writer Ronald D. Moore was asked to join VOYAGER as co-executive

producer after DS9 finished its run.

Moore helped the VOYAGER staff break the first episode, "Equinox Part II," penned the script for "Survival Instinct," and contributed the story idea for "Barge of the Dead." But before "Survival Instinct" even filmed, Moore had left VOYAGER under tumultuous circumstances. All the professionals involved made light of this when it happened in June of 1999, but in fact there was a deep rift that had developed between former writing partners Braga and Moore.

Ken Biller, who left VOYAGER at the end of season five, came back quickly at this point, becoming co-executive producer and helping to get the work load under control. New writers were brought on-board, and things settled down to a reasonable pace by the time the group was working on episode six, "Riddles." Said Braga, "Ron Moore left under somewhat tempestuous circumstances. Ken Biller very graciously returned, and has done a really nice job this year. Ken Biller was really great. Everyone did a great job."

Robert Picardo (the Doctor) talked during season six about Moore's departure, saying, "I like Ron Moore very much. I knew him probably better than any of my fellow actors in our cast because I had done DEEP SPACE NINE and Ron and I had socialized. I was delighted he was coming on-board our show, and very disappointed when he left, so quickly. I think the reasons for which he left are personal and private. But I miss him, and I wish he was still with us."

"Ron represented an infusion of new energy, because he was an incredibly accomplished STAR TREK writer who had not written for our cast and our characters. Having said that, I've always been fond of Ken Biller, and I'm delighted that he is back on our show. I just think it was a bit of a shock. It happened quite quickly. Ken, as talented and accomplished as he is, had been on our show from the beginning, so naturally you wouldn't necessarily think of him as being new blood. But I think things are going smoothly. The road might be a little rocky at times, but I think that the shows are pret-



BORG IN THE BACKGROUND: Jeri Ryan's Seven of Nine served a pivotal role in fewer stories, but the fan-favorite still figured prominently in VOYAGER's final seasons.

its seventh and last season, VOYAGER would be the only STAR TREK series on television, DEEP SPACE NINE having finished its run in Spring, 1999. Ratings were declining compared with VOYAGER's earlier seasons, an industry-wide trend, but still of concern. Along with the decline in ratings, fans and even some of the actors and writers began to express dissatisfaction with the show.

By the end of season six, executive producer Rick Berman, keeper of the TREK



STABILITY IN SPACE:
With the exception of
Seven of Nine's addition,
the core cast of **STAR
TREK: VOYAGER**
remained essentially
untouched since the
series' debut.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

SEASON SIX

EPISODE GUIDE

By Anna L. Kaplan

"He's a Starfleet captain, and he's decided to abandon everything this uniform stands for... I'm going to hunt him down, no matter how long it takes, no matter what the cost."

—Captain Janeway

EQUINOX PART II

★★

9/22/99, Production #221, Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Story by Rick Berman & Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Directed by David Livingston.

In the continuation of the season five closer, Janeway becomes determined to hunt down Ransom—captain of the *Equinox*, another Caretaker-acquired Federation vessel—and bring him to justice for his role in murdering other-dimensional lifeforms for fuel. Chakotay thinks there might be a way to communicate with the aliens, but Janeway's obsession grows.

Said Brannon Braga, "It dug deeper into the characters of Janeway and Ransom. The two captains shift positions: Janeway moves into the darkness; Ransom moves into enlightenment, which was our intention. Seven of Nine as Ransom's conscience was rather interesting. John Savage really gave a wonderful performance. The interrogation scene with Janeway and the *Equinox* crewman, when she nearly kills him, I thought was one of the more intense scenes we have done."

Although the idea of captains going in opposite directions made for an interesting story, the finale sabotaged the rest of the episode.

"I used to be afraid of the dark."

—Seven of Nine

SURVIVAL INSTINCT

★★★

9/29/99, Production #222, Stardate 53049.2. Written by Ronald D. Moore. Directed by Terry Windell.

The Captain has allowed shore leave at the Markonian Outpost, as well as letting visitors on-board. Seven is approached by a man who shows her Borg artifacts, which prompts in the former drone memories of a time when, as one of a group of crash survivors, Seven experienced her first separation from the Collective.

Said Braga about this, Moore's only *VOYAGER* script, "I wanted to do a Borg crash landing and follow an adventure that Seven of Nine had many years ago when she was a drone; do a Donner Party with Borg drones, and how they survive, flashing forward to the present. I had a slightly different take on that idea than Ron did, but I thought that it was Ron's first script and I should really let him run with it. It was a really good Ron Moore script. What we learned was that Borg are far more effective when they are Borg, and far less effective when they are ex-Borg."

"B'Elanna's misdeeds have led her to Grethor. She comes with no valor, no glory, nothing to celebrate in song and story."

—Captain Janeway.

BARGE OF THE DEAD

★★★

10/6/99, Production #223, Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller. Story by Ronald D. Moore & Bryan Fuller. Directed by Mike Vejar.

On the heels of an ion storm, B'Elanna Torres's shuttle crash lands on *Voyager*. Suffering a mild concussion, she begins to witness curious phenomena: An old Klingon artifact which Chakotay says was found on the shuttle begins to bleed and speak in Klingon; Tuvok cuts her with a bat-leth; and as the crew celebrates the Klingons, a warrior comes and kills everyone, including

ty good."

Biller recalled, "Officially I was back on the show by the fourth episode, which was 'Tinker, Tenor, Doctor, Spy,' although I hadn't been here for the development of that episode. I wasn't really involved in the first four or five episodes. When I came back, there was a little bit of a lack of development. There weren't a lot of stories ready to go. Then the first episode I really dug my teeth into was 'Riddles,' which was a story that I had always wanted to do. Rob Doherty, who is [now] a staff writer, I brought back on the show when I came back. He had been my assistant and had rewritten a couple of freelance episodes for us. One of my conditions for coming back was that I would bring Rob on staff. So Rob and I worked really closely together on 'Riddles.'

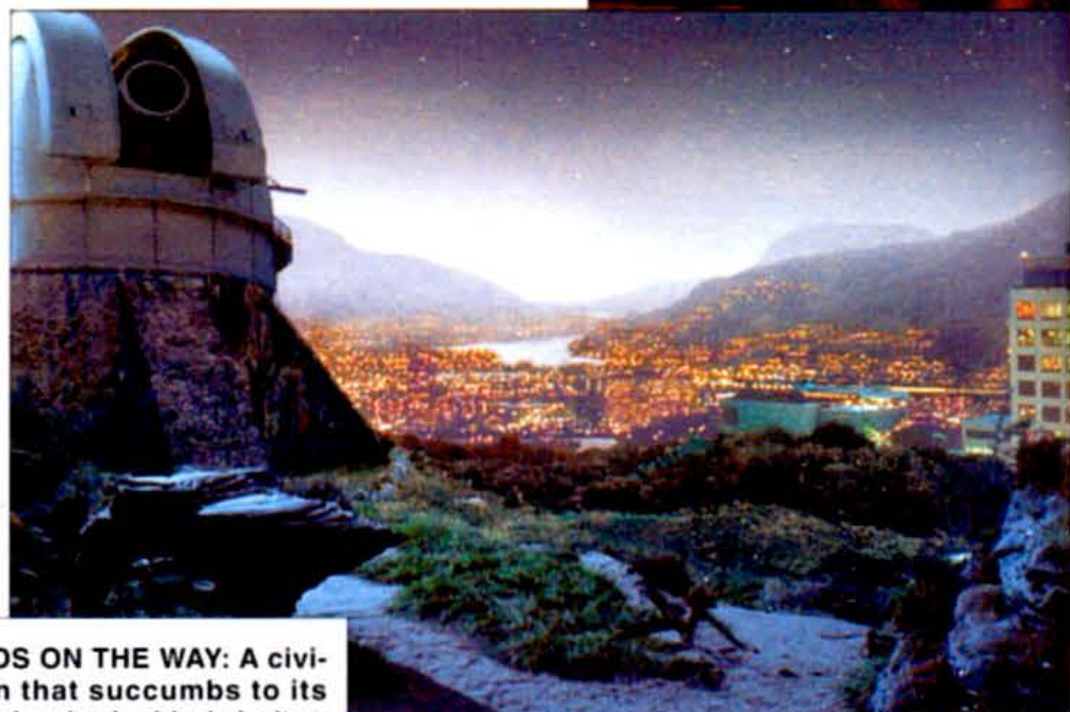
"Once I was in here, I was working on all the episodes. What began to happen during the course of the year was Brannon and I ended up trading off episodes. My job when I came back was kind of to try to reorganize the staff and make sure we had scripts in development, and the scripts were ready to shoot. What I ended up doing was really not writing a lot of originals, but doing an enormous amount of rewriting and taking every other script through pre-production and production."

Joe Menosky continued as co-executive producer.

He said that season six was a good time for new writers to try their hand, as the staff took pitches and looked for talent. Also joining the staff for the season, as a writer and producer, was Robin Burger, who had worked on previous *TREK* and other television shows under her maiden name, Bernheim. Bryan Fuller worked his fourth season on *VOYAGER*. Writer Raf Green was added to the mix later in the season, after pitching the story that became "Virtuoso." Said Biller, "The writer who pitched it to me, Raf Green, is not really a writer at all, although he had been a poet and a singer and an artist. He knew the show, and he had gotten in somehow to pitch the story to me. He wrote a really good story document, and then kind of begged us to let him write the script. Normally we wouldn't have done it. But actually Joe Menosky said, 'You know, we should give this guy a crack,' and we did. He ended up writing a really rough but impressive first draft. We thought, 'This is a guy that's worth trying to nurture,' so we brought him onto the show. I talked to his agent, and his agent

said, 'You know, yesterday Raf was my dog walker, and today I'm making a deal for him.' That's a real Hollywood story."

Rick Berman explained that he was able to devote a lot of his time during season six just to *VOYAGER*. He said, "I'm certainly not taking any credit for it, but this is the first time in a



WORLDS ON THE WAY: A civilization that succumbs to its own technological hubris (top right, from "Dragon's Teeth") and a society that forms in the "Blink of an Eye" (above) were some of the more exotic planets visited during season six.

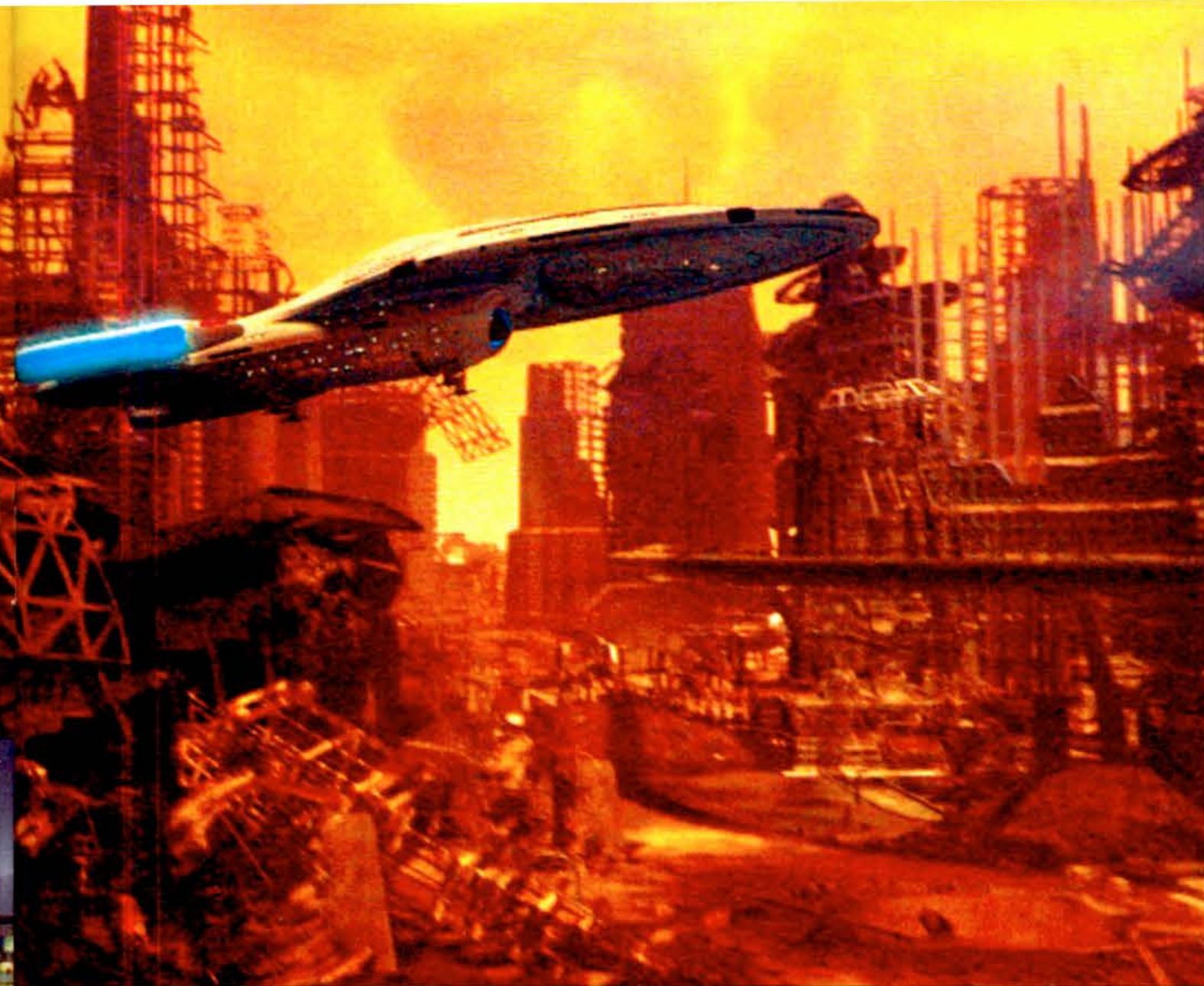
long while that I have only been involved in one television series, because of the various combinations of *THE NEXT GENERATION* and *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *VOY-*

AGER. It's been great for me, because I have been much more involved in it, and it's been a lot of fun. I think that we've turned out a really good balance of episodes."

Berman contributed more story ideas during the sixth season than in years past, getting story credit for "Equinox Part II" and "Fury," and doing uncredited development work on other scripts. Noted Berman, "I've been involved anywhere from a tiny agree to a large degree in every story that we do. I discuss all the stories when they are at their infant stages with Brannon Braga or with Ken Biller, and then give notes and deal with them when they are in more of an eight-to-ten-page state. Occasionally if a story comes from an idea of mine, my name might show up on the screen, but it usually doesn't."

THE CREW: CHARACTER GROWTH WITH THE ALPHA QUADRANT IN SIGHT

By the tenth episode of season six, the writer/producers began contact with Earth that continued through season seven. Be-



cause of that contact, Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) would have to answer to Starfleet. "Pathfinder" brought back popular characters from THE NEXT GENERATION, Reginald Barclay, played by Dwight Schultz, and Counselor Troi, played by Marina Sirtis, as Barclay managed to establish communication with the Voyager.

Later in the season, in "Life Line," ongoing contact was set up at regular intervals, and the Doctor traveled back via the MIDAS Array to help treat his creator, Lewis Zimmerman. Not only did these episodes give viewers a look at Earth and Jupiter Station, they started giving Janeway and crew food for thought. Starfleet sent a message asking Janeway point blank about the status of the Maquis, the number of casualties that Voyager had suffered, and information on contact with the Borg, making it quite clear that the crew would have many problems to address, if and when they did manage to return home.

Biller added, "Certainly, now that we have communication with Earth, life in the Alpha Quadrant, life on Earth, and life in the Federation is going to affect more and more life for these isolated people in the Delta Quadrant. I think that there certainly will be many shows next season where that comes into play. Although it's intermittent and sporadic, we do have some regular contact from Earth now. We know that the Doctor's program can be compressed and can travel. We know that Janeway can receive orders and instructions from Starfleet. We know that we can get news and information from friends and family at home. I think that there will be some episodes in which this is in the background, or might be the

spark of a story. There will be other stories where I think it is more front and center."

As in most seasons, season six was a good one for Robert Picardo. His daydreams caused a sensation in "Tinker, Tenor, Doctor, Spy," written by Joe Menosky, which many picked as their favorite episode of the season. The Doctor also managed to spend years on a planet existing in a different time frame in the episode "Blink of an Eye," also written by Menosky. There, he fathered a child. When asked how, Picardo said, "I guess my program was upgraded at a certain point, and I suppose I am fully functional over my holographic extremities. I think that is destined to become one of the great pieces of VOYAGER trivia: in what episode did the Doctor father a child? That was in the script. It surprised the heck out of me. He fell in love, and apparently he ain't just shooting photons."

The Doctor became a singing sensation in "Virtuoso," and almost left the Voyager. Picardo was not happy about what that said about the Doctor. He recalled, "Doing that show, I thought that it was very hard to make the audience believe that the Doctor would abandon his friends for what ap-

B'Elanna. She finds herself on the Klingon Barge of the Dead, her dishonored soul being ferried to Grethor—Klingon Hell. During the voyage, she encounters her mother, Miral (Karen Austin), who has been sentenced to Grethor for B'Elanna's failures as a Klingon and a person. Awakening in sickbay, B'Elanna realizes that she must convince Captain Janeway to allow her to go back to the Barge of the Dead, and assume her mother's dishonor.

Moore, TREK's Klingon expert, contributed this story before he departed from VOYAGER. Said Braga, "We really felt that if VOYAGER was going to do Klingons, we should do something unique. Klingon Hell was an idea that Ron Moore had been thinking about on DEEP SPACE NINE, but they never got around to doing it. When Ron came over, one of the first things I said was, 'We are ripping off Klingon Hell.' Ron wrote a story for us. Bryan Fuller did a terrific job on that script. Producing the Barge was a real feat, a real challenge for our production team."

Added Fuller, "The first draft of 'Barge of the Dead' had much more Klingon mythology than the final draft. I think it would have been, for the layperson, a little overwhelming to try to catch up. We really tried to simplify it. Coming up with all that stuff was a treat, and working with Ron Moore on that was a lot of fun."

"Tuvok I understand,
You are a Vulcan Man.
You have just gone without,
For seven years, about.
Paris please find the way,
To load a hypospray.
I will give you the sign.
Just aim for his behind."
(To the tune of *La donna e mobile*, from *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi.)

—The Doctor

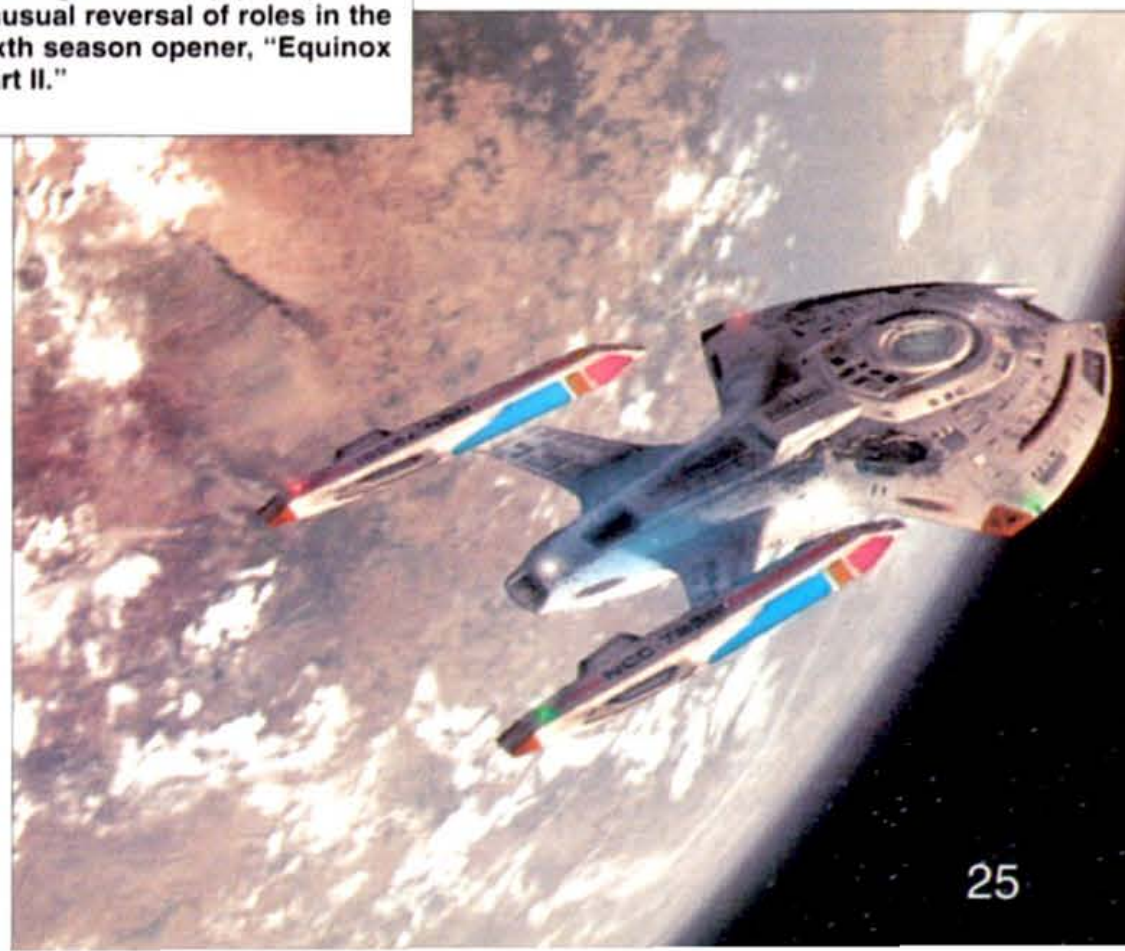
TINKER, TENOR, DOCTOR, SPY ★★★★★

10/12/99. Stardate unknown. Production # 224. Teleplay by Joe Menosky. Story by Bill Vallely. Directed by John Bruno.

The Doctor restrains Tuvok, who is in the throes of *pon farre*. As the Doctor indulges in daydreams—something over which he has less and less control, and which include such grandiose imagery as the EMH painting Seven in the nude and assuming command during a Borg attack—the ship comes under the surveillance of wonderfully hippo-like aliens who have targeted Voyager for a technology raid.

Said Braga, "We wanted to do THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY with Neelix. We realized that it would probably be a better show for the Doctor. A hologram having daydreams, particularly a character like the Doctor, might be a whole lot more fun. In that case, you could actually go onto the

DARK IMPULSE: The presence of a rogue starship prompts an unusual reversal of roles in the sixth season opener, "Equinox Part II."



holodeck and see his daydreams, which was particularly humiliating for the Doctor. Joe Menosky just nailed that script. Mike Westmore came through for us. Those were the best aliens this year. That's my favorite one of the year." Ours, too.



PAGING STEPHEN KING: Paris falls under the spell of a seductive spaceship in "Alice."

"We've already got a full complement of shuttles, not to mention the Delta Flyer. What do we need with this derelict ship?"
—Chakotay

ALICE

★★

10/20/99. Production #226. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller & Michael Taylor. Story by Juliann deLayne. Directed by David Livingston.

The Voyager finds a junkyard in space. Mr. Abbadon (John Fleck) convinces many of the crew to make trades. Tom Paris becomes interested in a small, beat-up ship with a neurogenic interface. Chakotay reluctantly agrees to trade for it.

Soon Tom is spending all his time with the ship, whom he calls "Alice." After he activates the neurogenic interface, he alone can hear and see Alice (Claire Rankin). Tom becomes single-minded in pursuit of fixing Alice, the ship convincing him to steal components, finish her repairs, and leave Voyager. It falls to Janeway, the Doctor, and B'Elanna to find a way to save him.

Said Bryan Fuller, "'Alice' was my least favorite episode this season. Usually when we do an episode that's an homage to another work—CHRISTINE—you make it your own, to keep the audience guessing. We did too direct of a translation. I thought Mike and I wrote the story as well as it could be, but the story wasn't that compelling."

Agreed Biller, "'Alice' was something we had to whip into shape pretty quickly to fill a gap that we had. I didn't think the episode came out very well. I think it was probably one of the worst of the year. Somehow in the production and the casting and the mounting of the episode, it got, I thought, very silly and broad."

John Fleck, one of Livingston's favorite actors, has appeared in much TREK, last seen as the Romulan Koval in DS9's last season.

"If anyone can provoke Tuvok, Mr. Neelix, it's you."
—The Doctor

RIDDLES

★★★

11/03/99. Stardate 53263.0. Production #227. Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Andre Bormanis. Directed by Roxann Dawson.

Neelix and Tuvok return in the Delta Flyer from a meeting with the Keset. En route, Tuvok is attacked by an invisible intruder and sustains severe neurological damage. On Voyager, the Doctor stabilizes the Vulcan, but he is in a coma. When Tuvok awakens, he is terrified, simple-minded, and desperate for Neelix's company.

peared to be an ego trip." In "Life Line," Robert Picardo played both the Doctor and Dr. Lewis Zimmerman, his creator. More unusual still was that Picardo received story credit along with director John Bruno for the episode. Picardo also directed again in the sixth season, "One Small Step," about an early Mars mission.

Although Tom Paris was only featured in one episode, "Alice," his character seemed to be everywhere. Said actor Robert Duncan McNeill, "What they have found over the years is that Tom Paris tends to be a great second character for other stories, as well as his own stories. He becomes a great utility character, because he is a good foil to a lot of characters. I am really happy about that, because I like the chance to be able to get involved in a lot of stories, rather than just being there for one purpose only."

"Part of that is being on the bridge crew. I get to be involved in a lot of stories there. Being the pilot, I get to fly the shuttle a lot. Plus I just think, character-wise, he compliments almost every character in an interesting way. I tend to get a lot of stories as the supporting player, or the sidekick, on some away mission with someone. Even though it may be focused a little more on that other character, I get to play out some important scenes with these other characters as they go through their story."

Roxann Dawson's B'Elanna Torres found herself with a full plate. The character's Klingon roots received attention in the third episode "Barge of the Dead," while Dawson became the first female cast member to direct any STAR TREK episode when she took the reigns for "Riddles."

Although Dawson and Picardo directed during season six, and Tim Russ (Tuvok) directed previously, as did McNeill, Garrett Wang (Harry Kim) was not given the opportunity. He was vocal about his disappointment, saying, "Hopefully I'll get a spot to direct before this whole thing is over. They kind of closed the curtain, which is a little unfair. If they are going to allow McNeill to direct three episodes, Picardo to direct two episodes, Roxann, one, and Tim Russ, one, I see no reason why they should close the door on me. It just is not a very fair thing to do that. But at the time that I asked, which was the beginning of [the sixth] season, Rick Berman was really not happy about anyone else directing. But Brannon told me, 'Just stick to your guns. Go to editing, just start learning the

things you need to learn, and we'll work on it.' So hopefully I will get a slot season seven. I haven't been given the official word, yes or no, forever. No for now, back in the beginning of this year, but we'll see what happens. I think it would be a good thing." Wang's hopes would not be fulfilled, however. By the end of season seven, he had received no opportunity to direct.

Seven of Nine (Jeri Ryan) once again received lots of airtime, including a flashback story in "Survival Instinct," being overwhelmed with information in "The Voyager Conspiracy," fighting a combat sport in "Tsunkatse," saving Borg children in "Collective," and seeing the conclusion of the Borg finale, "Unimatrix Zero." Said Berman, "Last year I think we may have been a little heavy on Seven of Nine episodes. We certainly haven't been light on them this season, but I think we've gotten a better balance."

In a new Borg twist, the children that Seven saved in "Collective" stayed on board, at least through the end of season six. They included Mezoti (Marley S. McClean), Azan and Rebi (Kurt and Cody Wetherill), and the oldest, Icheb (Manu In-traymi). Noted Braga, "We had no intention of ever bringing these Borg kids back again. But we decided to end the show with keeping them, and then we found some more stories with them."

One story that generated a lot of publicity as well as much controversy was "Tsunkatse." In the story, Seven of Nine was forced to fight in a high-tech, martial arts and wrestling combat sport, against her will, with two actors familiar to

MAY THE FAUX BE WITH YOU: Actor Ethan Phillips claimed to not mind Neelix's diminished role in the closing seasons, but still managed to get (wo)manhandled by a phony Janeway in "Live Fast and Prosper," an episode directed by NEXT GEN alum LeVar Burton (above center).





DEEP SPACE NINE fans cast in high-profile roles. Jeffrey Combs, who played both Weyoun and Brunt on DS9, played Penk, the game's alien overseer. J.G. Hertzler, best known as Martok, put on other makeup to become a Hirogen hunter. Rick Berman wanted to cast these two actors. He said, "I just love those guys. When we thought about one, we suddenly realized that we had two roles. What better than to bring Jeff in to play the ringmaster? People know [J.G. Hertzler] in one set of makeup, and now he was in another set. We managed to cover them up with enough alien makeup that it doesn't really matter. I will use any excuse to bring those guys back. It's fun and it's germane to the episode, which is important to me, as was bringing back Dwight and Marina in the episodes where they have returned this season. We try not to bring people back, unless there is a good reason to."

The more controversial guest in "Tsunkatse" was Duane Johnson, or "The Rock," as he is known to fans of WWF wrestling. STAR TREK fans screamed over what was perceived as stunt casting. WWF airs on UPN, and in fact is the mini-web's highest rated show, so it seemed that this might have been an attempt to lure wrestling fans over to VOYAGER. Said Berman, "I have been criticized as having been pressured by the network to bring one of the wrestlers onto the show, which is absolutely not the case. We went to a UPN function and we met a bunch of these guys about a year ago. We've been looking for a reason to put one

of them into a show, and when 'Tsunkatse' came along, it was just a perfect fit.

"We managed to get 'The Rock,' who seems to be becoming more and more of an actor. I think if we had known how good an actor he was, we would have written a bigger part for him. Anybody who saw SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, and saw him in half a dozen skits, maybe more, can see that he is a very talented actor. He [was] wonderful on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, and he got a big role in THE MUMMY RETURNS. He was a joy to work with, and it worked out well. But it was our idea. We weren't pressured, which is something that I have always wanted to make clear to people."

The episode managed to get the highest Nielsen rating of the season: a 4.1, down from season five's high of 4.7 for "Dark Frontier." Noted writer Rob Doherty, "'The Rock,' I thought, was more than adequate in his role. I thought he did some decent acting with his several lines. He was probably in the promos and commercials as much as he was in the whole show. He was certainly a selling point, to try and attract new people to STAR TREK. I think that was a valiant effort to draw new people in and show them what STAR TREK is about. At the same time, for the fans who were averse to the possibility, I don't think he was in long enough to offend anyone. For the time he was in, I thought he did a pretty good job. Just from looking at various websites, and talking to people coming in to pitch, I think a lot of people were nervous about it. Once they saw it and heard good things about it, they were willing to check it out and give us a chance."

Season six also brought a

THE NEW FORBIDDEN PLANET: The Voyager crew discover the dangerous secrets of a dead society in "Dragon's Teeth."



new holodeck program, the Irish town of Fair Haven, in the episode of the same name, and later in "Spirit Folk." Explained Braga, "We thought it was time to explore a new holographic arena. Captain Proton had worn out its welcome. An Irish town seemed fun. We tried to avoid the clichés. I fear that we didn't avoid all of them. It was a little precious at times."

Many fans had complaints about the

continued on page 30

Janeway contacts the Keset. They send Narog (Mark Moses), who has a machine he claims can detect the Beneth, mythological shadow people who are believed to attack other vessels. The device is used in the Delta Flyer, revealing residuals left by very real aliens.

Said Doherty, "'Riddles' was a great story. Being my first script of the season, it was a struggle. I would say it was probably the toughest script I've had all year. It was ultimately very rewarding. I think pairing Tuvok and Neelix is always great. They're fun characters to write for, especially together. But with Ken's help in particular, I think it came out very nicely."

Added Biller, "I thought 'Riddles' was a terrific episode. Roxann Dawson did a really great job directing it. Rob did a really good job on the first draft of the script. I did a lot of rewriting on it, but I love the episode."

"The Vaadwaur were an aggressive culture, who expanded their territory by using the corridors to attack other worlds, until some of those worlds banded together to defend themselves, and put an end to the Vaadwaur threat."

—Captain Janeway.

DRAGON'S TEETH

★★1/2

11/10/99. Production #225. Stardate 53167.9. Teleplay by Michael Taylor and Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Story by Michael Taylor. Directed by Winrich Kolbe.

Voyager finds itself in a subspace corridor filled with debris, some of which is over 800 years old. The Turei, who claim the corridor, order the starship out and pursue them into normal space, where the crew discovers that they have traveled 200 light years. Again threatened by the Turei, Voyager gets away by heading into the thermosphere of a planet poisoned with radiogenic particles. Grounded, they find the remains of a city, and the biopods of the Vaadwaur, the discoverers and mappers of the subspace corridors.

Said Braga, "We thought that 'Dragon's Teeth' was going to be a two-hour. It wasn't good enough. We made it into a one-hour. I'm glad we did, because I don't think those aliens turned out very well. The concept was cool, that they were buried for a thousand years. The problem is, it's all backstory. It just didn't go anywhere.

Sometimes you create an alien race that turns out really cool, and you keep going with them, and sometimes they don't quite work. In this case they didn't quite work."

Jeff Allin and Robert Knepper both appeared in episodes of TNG.

"Centuries ago, mankind sent its first wave of explorers into that void, astronauts like Mr. Kelly. They paved the way for the first colonies, the first starships, for those of us who have made space our home."

—Captain Janeway.

ONE SMALL STEP

★★★

11/17/99. Production #228. Stardate 53292.7. Teleplay by Mike Wollaefer & Jessica Scott and Bryan Fuller & Michael Taylor. Story by Mike Wollaefer & Jessica Scott. Directed by Robert Picardo.

On Voyager, malfunctioning systems herald the arrival of a graviton ellipse, an object attracted by electromagnetic energy that appears at random out of subspace and engulfs whatever is in its path. Rarely seen, it is known to be the phenomenon that caused the disappearance of the manned Mars explorer Aries IV in 2032. When the Delta Flyer, manned by Chakotay, Paris, and Seven, becomes trapped in the ellipse, it falls to Seven to perform a component run on the rediscovered hulk of the Aries IV. While in the ship, Seven finds the logs of Kelly and learns of his heroism.

This episode aired very soon after one of the

Robert Picardo

VOYAGER Paradox: The Beloved Actor Brings the Contradictions of Soul to a Sentient Hologram

By Anna L. Kaplan

Robert Picardo spent a busy final two seasons on STAR TREK: VOYAGER, with many wonderful episodes for the Doctor to explore in both years. Picardo got to direct again, pulling "One Small Step" in the directorial rotation during season six. Most amazing, though, was that one of his ideas landed him a story credit, as he and John Bruno came up with the idea for "Life Line." He also began work on a book about the Doctor, written in character.

The first big Doctor show in season six was arguably the best episode of the year, and one of VOYAGER's funniest ever, "Tinker, Tenor, Doctor, Spy," written by Joe Menosky and directed by John Bruno. Giving himself special algorithms, the Doctor gained the ability to daydream, but gradually lost control, much to his chagrin. Said Picardo, "We had a wonderful new director on our show, John Bruno, who is a visual-effects genius; has won an Academy Award for THE ABYSS. He is, I believe, our first Academy Award-winning VOYAGER director, although he won as a visual effects designer. I think he came on our show thinking he was going to get a big sci-fi episode with a lot of space battles, and instead he got a comedy centered on the Doctor. But he did just a great job. It is, in my opinion, the most successful comedy we have done in five and a half seasons of VOYAGER."

Picardo laughed. "I can speak honestly about this because I was involved in most of the other comic episodes. I think that the fun goes right up to the edge without going over the top. It's THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY,

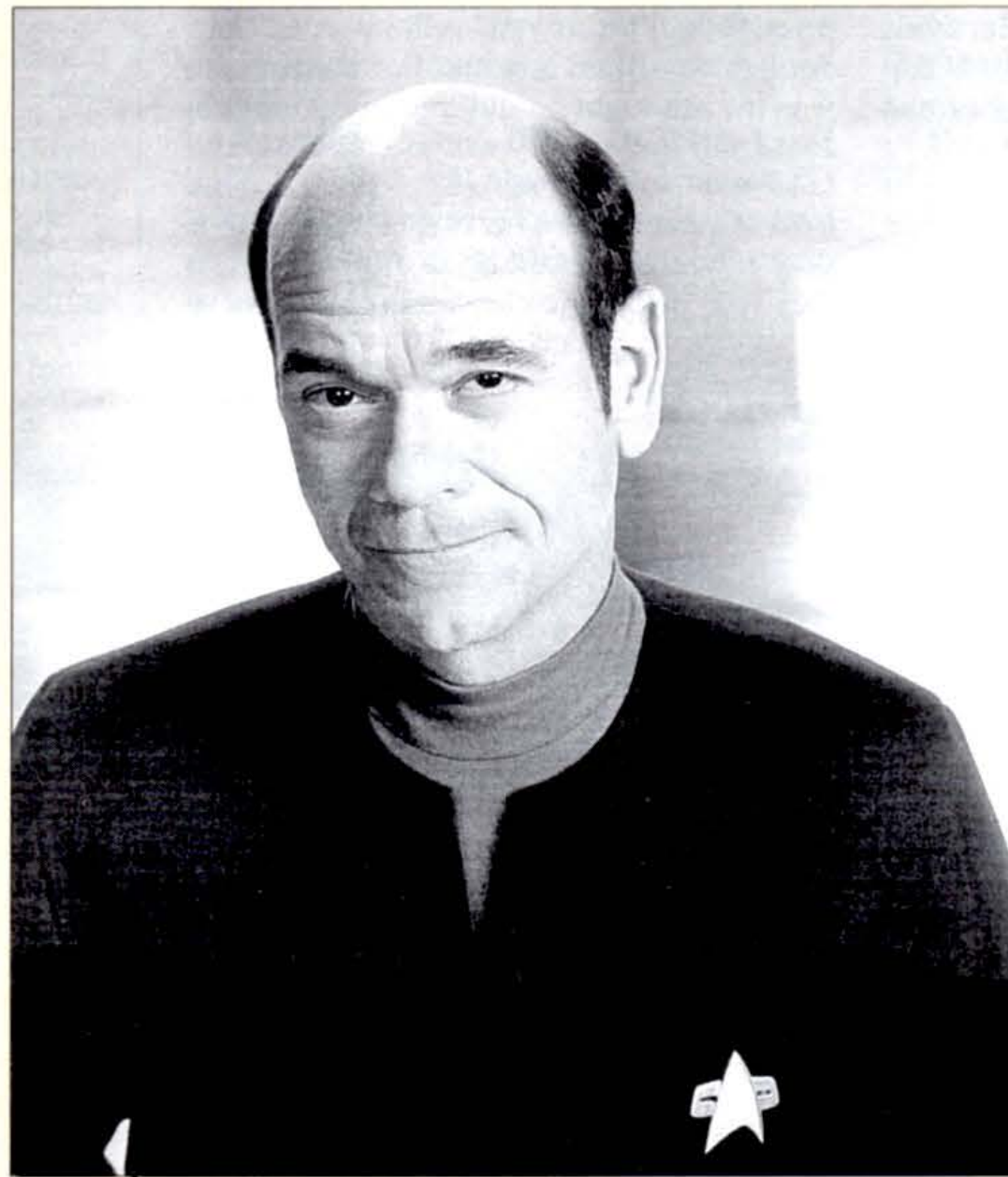
of American manhood, because that sounds a little homoerotic, which is not my intention. But I thought, 'How do we get the entire world to watch this episode? Well, let's put this scene in the trailer.'

"I wish I could I have that

She's my toughest audience."

Picardo turned director for "One Small Step," a story about an early manned Mars mission gone awry. The episode featured Phil Morris as an astronaut whose module got sucked up into a graviton ellipse, and is rediscovered by Voyager hundreds of years later. He said, "I was very proud of that. That was probably the more exhausting experience, because you are exercising areas of your brain that you don't have to as an actor. You have to keep so many balls in the air, directing. We get the material late, so you are thinking so much at the last minute, and so quickly. But with what limited prep time you have when you finally get the material, you really have to do a lot of visualizing... take the overview position and say, 'How can I tell this best? How can I make it exciting and arresting to look at?' [That's] just something that I am not used to doing. It takes extra time, and there was no time."

During many episodes, the Doctor was performing his role as part of the VOYAGER ensemble, but still got time in the spotlight. In "Fair Haven" and "Spirit Folk," the Doctor visited the town of Fair Haven as their priest. Said Picardo, "For a cradle Catholic, that was a dream come true. I wish my mom had lived long enough to see me in the collar. I took a picture of myself as the Catholic priest in Polaroid, and gave it to my priest that week. I thought I would show him what I look like in the cloth."



with the Doctor as Walter Mitty. I will stop at nothing to get people to watch my work on television, even suggesting to the writers that one of the Doctor's fantasies is to sketch Seven of Nine naked. I think I have... I can't say my hand on the pulse

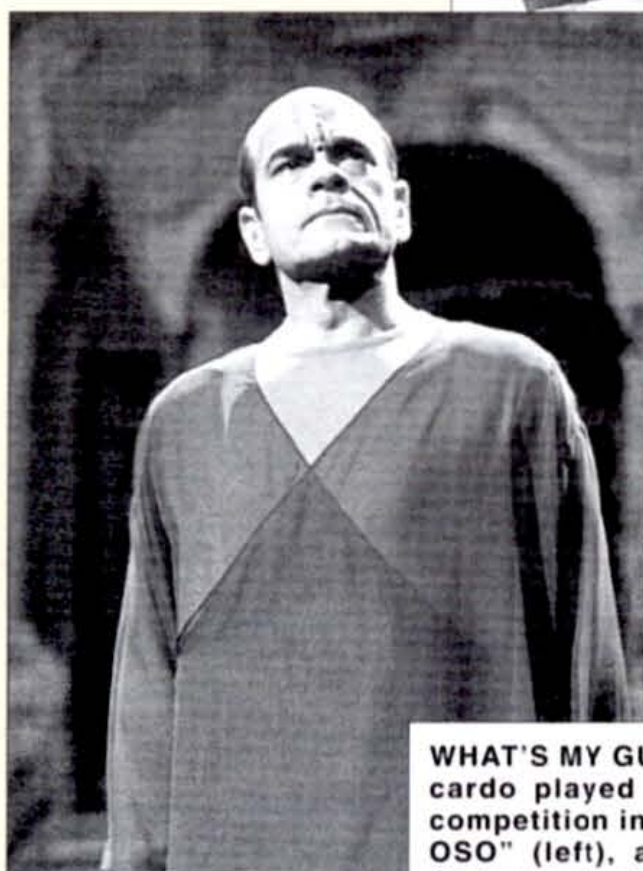
scene in the briefing room with all those women in love with me every week. Everyone I have previewed it for, including my wife—who is a little tired of STAR TREK, I have to tell you—said it's the best one she's seen. She's was crazy about it.

"Virtuoso," featured the Doctor in a story about a culture tantalized by the EMH's singing. Picardo, though, was upset that he did not get to sing the operatic selections himself. He was also unhappy that the writers would portray the Doctor as so willing to leave Voyager for a singing career. He said, "I have to tell you, I thought it was a story problem that the Doctor was so willing to leave the ship behind, all of his friends. That always gave me pause. I encouraged Ken Biller to make it a 'fool for love' story as much as possible, that the Doctor was sort of swept off his feet by this female alien. I guess I felt that that part of the story never quite took off."

"I still enjoy the show a lot. I thought the mini-singing Doctor was sort of a classic STAR TREK image. It was very challenging musically, obviously. This is the first time I didn't sing everything in the show—I had done all my singing before. This time, I learned to sing the opera pieces, and I could sing both parts of all of them. I could not sing them in that high register, so I sang the playback of a professional opera singer. I busted my butt learning them, and had them taken down slightly, and sang them in a lower register. We did a four-hour re-recording session where I sang everything. Then they didn't use me." (Picardo's vocal coach, Augustino Castagnola, performed the selections in the final dub.)

Perhaps in compensation, the actor did double duty, literally, in "Life Line." He and John Bruno also shared a story credit for the episode, in which the Doctor's program gets sent back to the Alpha Quadrant so he can try and cure his creator, Dr. Lewis Zimmerman, of a fatal illness. Picardo has played Zimmerman before, as both a human in DEEP SPACE NINE's "Dr. Bashir, I Presume," and as a hologram in VOYAGER's "The Swarm." By now, Zimmerman has aged, requiring Picardo to wear extra makeup. Also, the entire episode revolved around the interaction between the two men, necessitating the use of motion

control equipment on the set. Said Picardo, "There was a lot of motion control photography, and digital split screen, and bluescreen. Doing the motion control shots on 'Life Line,' your brain is working on many levels. For example, I played Dr. Zimmerman along with Barclay, when we



WHAT'S MY GUISE? Picardo played his own competition in "VIRTUOSO" (left), and as a Catholic took private pleasure in donning the collar for "Fair Haven" (top).

were only pretending that the holographic doctor was there. Then the second pass, when I played the holographic doctor, I had no Barclay, no Zimmerman. You are only pretending to make eye contact, and you're playing with very critical marks on the floor. If you are two inches off the mark, then the computer control's framing and the camera don't work, and it's slicing through your arm. Two inches off to the left, then I am infringing on the virtual character of Doc Zimmerman, who everybody sees on the video playback, except me. You also have to deliver your lines in the very narrow audio time frame that you've allowed yourself for that line to be delivered. My stand in, J.R. Quinonez, who did an incredible amount of preparation, learned both characters. He could perform the part I wasn't doing, and then would carefully copy my pace as much as he could, because I



was ultimately married to his pace. In whatever character I wasn't playing the first time through, he delivered the lines on camera. So I had to deliver the lines in that same time-frame, and get the line in, in the audio track, in the discrete amount of time al-

lowed. Otherwise I would overlap with the other dialogue and ruin the take. It's very technically demanding. You experience mental burnout after the 15th hour, and then sometimes you work three hours after that. It is magical when it works. The scenes where I am in the picture, clearly, in two different places, walking around myself, chasing myself, pulling something out of my own hand, it's really amazing."

Season seven took a more serious approach to the Doctor in many instances. "I had some fun things to do," Picardo noted, "more dramatic this year, than last year, I think. 'Critical Care' was quite dramatic, an indictment of managed health care."

"Critical Care" put the Doctor on an alien ship where he was forced to make life and death decisions about the rationing of health care. "Flesh and Blood," aired as a two-hour telemovie for the November sweeps, saw the Doctor recruited by self-aware holograms searching for justice. Said Pi-

cardo, "The two-parter, 'Flesh and Blood,' was quite exciting. I had the opportunity to work with my good friend Jeff Yagher. That was a special bonus. I was flattered that they hung a two-hour movie on the Doctor's character. I thought it dealt with some very interesting entitlement issues for holograms, and of course, by science fiction allegory, to any oppressed group of individuals."

VOYAGER's penultimate episode, "Renaissance Man," was a mystery in which the Doctor was forced to take on the physical characteristics of other crew members in order to save Janeway. Noted Picardo, "From the audience's perspective, it looks like at first Janeway and then other characters are acting in a very unpredictable and even subversive way, but it turns out to be me... It seems like Janeway has lost the will and courage to make the trip home. In fact, it's just the Doctor trying to create a cover story, so that he can pursue his agenda to save [Janeway's] life on a very short time frame."

In order to film this, Picardo and the other actors had to match moves so that a morph from, say, the Doctor into B'Elanna could be done in post. Laughed Picardo, "We found out which of the men are more limber than the others. I have to tell you I fared quite well. I found out that I can bend more like my action figure than Robert Beltran can his."

CFQ

real unmanned Mars crafts was lost. Said Fuller, "It's very difficult for any writer to come into a show and get the voices and get the nuances of the characters in a first draft. Mike and I did a page one rewrite. We got the hook of Seven of Nine discovering humanity in a new light, and her exploring her own humanity in a different way, through this historical experience. You appreciate what all the astronauts and scientists and explorers have done and will continue to do. When you look at what's happening with the Mars program, you can't help but feel of twinge of frustration."

"Speculation is not evidence."

—Tuvok

THE VOYAGER CONSPIRACY

★1/2

11/24/99. Production #229. Stardate not given. Written by Joe Menosky. Directed by Terry Windell.

Voyager comes upon a catapult built to hurl a vessel hundreds of light years. Its creator, Tash (Albie Selznick), needs assistance with the device's power supply. Janeway agrees to help, with the understanding that Voyager can use the catapult after him, if he is successful. But Seven, after using a reconfigured alcove that downloads Voyager data to her cortical array, becomes increasingly paranoid, suspecting that Tash is involved in a conspiracy that incorporates Caretaker technology, the Federation, the Maquis, and the Cardassians.

Said Braga, "'The Voyager Conspiracy' was a great concept that Joe did a very good job writing, but that was hard to pull off. It worked on some levels, but on other levels it didn't. It's a very ambitious episode. It has some of the longest speeches in STAR TREK history. Seven's conspiracy theories are like ten pages long, extraordinarily difficult to act, and extraordinarily difficult to write. Joe Menosky had a twist that he added, where she spins out two completely different conspiracy theories. You could come up with a theory about just about anything with the right amount of information. In this case Seven has a lot of information going into her head, and you start to see connections everywhere."

"I've lost myself, Deanna... in Voyager. I've become obsessed with Voyager."

—Reginald Barclay (Dwight Schultz)

PATHFINDER

★★★

12/01/99. Production #230. Stardate not given. Teleplay by David Zabel and Ken Biller. Story by David Zabel. Directed by Mike Vejar.

Barclay has invited Counselor Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) to visit him during shore leave on Earth. In fact, he really needs counseling. He has been working on the Pathfinder project, a way to establish communication with Voyager, and he has become obsessed, finding solace only in a holographic Voyager program.

Said Braga, "Ken did a great job on that one. We wanted to do an episode that took place entirely from the point of view of Earth, coming up with ways to keep the audience off guard. We were just going to do a show about the Pathfinder project, and some guy who was trying to find Voyager. Somebody, and I can't remember who, had the idea to make it Barclay. We decided to throw Troi in there, and it turned out to be a really good episode."

"I've become romantically involved with a hologram, if that's possible."

—Captain Janeway

FAIR HAVEN

★★

1/12/2000. Production # 231. Stardate unknown. Written by Robin Burger. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

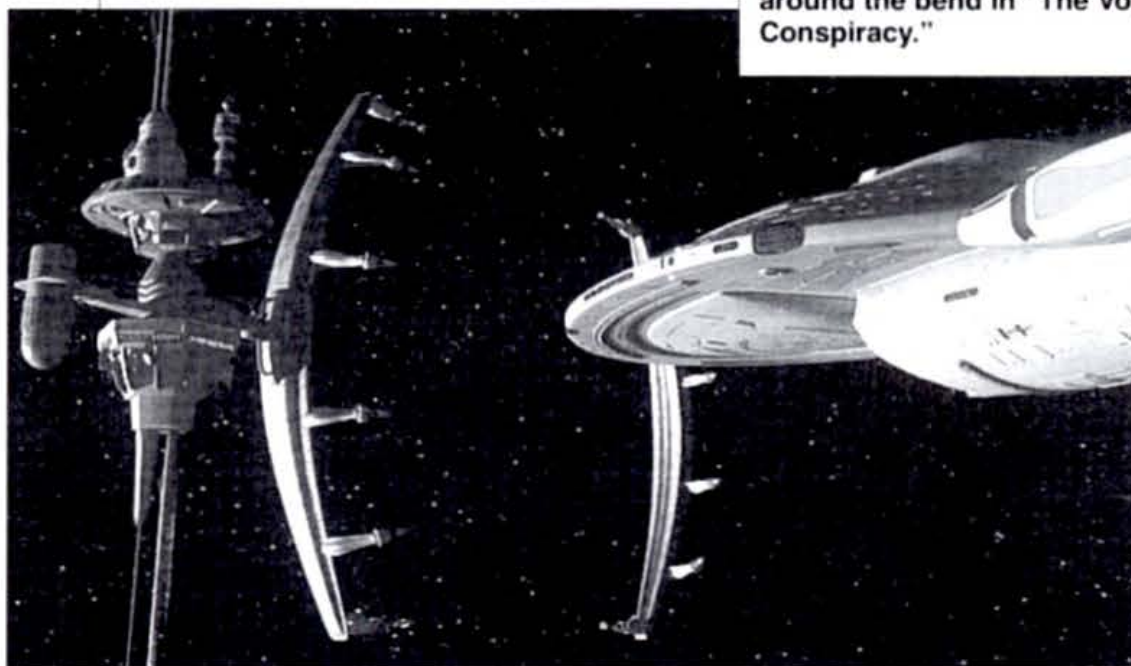
The crew is enjoying Tom's latest

town of Fair Haven, especially in "Spirit Folk." In that episode, as the Voyager crew tried to repair damage to the program and continued to interact with its many inhabitants, the townspeople became convinced that the Voyager crew were spirits of some kind. Viewers raised questions about the operation of the holodeck in general, and the idea of characters becoming aware of their situation. Writer Bryan Fuller said, "When someone begins to question what the holodeck can and cannot do, and the contrivances of holodeck storytelling, then we've already lost that person. We've already lost that audience, that berth, if they are getting hung up on those things."

Among the most vocal fans who didn't relish these forays into computer-generated folksiness were those who wished to see Captain Janeway romantically involved with Chakotay. Such fans, called the "J-Cers", were disappointed by Janeway's romance with the holographic Michael Sullivan, played by Fintan McKeown. Said Braga, "That was controversial. It angered the J-C contingent. But I rather liked the idea that the Captain had an affair with a hologram." Added Braga, "I think we've seen the last of Michael Sullivan."

What about a real romance for the Captain? In season seven, the problem would be approached

FOX MULDER BEAMS ABOARD: An exchange of technologies slowly drives Seven of Nine around the bend in "The Voyager Conspiracy."



from a different angle, but as of season six, Fuller said, "We kind of touched on it a little [in season five] with Kashyk in 'Counterpoint.' That was a great episode, one of the finest last season. But it's hard to do, because she is the captain and, as weird as it is, there is a double standard. Picard had a couple of dalliances. Janeway has had a couple of dalliances. Picard wasn't big on the romance front either. But if Janeway was jumping into the sack with green aliens, then it definitely would be less becoming. I think it's a different day, we are in a different age than the original series, so we can't have the romances every week, at least for the Captain. There is a certain tragic quality to someone in her position who is so isolated."

No one really got together in a romantic

way during season six. The relationship between Tom and B'Elanna stayed in the background. McNeill and Dawson were waiting for something that dealt with their characters' romance, to no satisfactory resolution. Said McNeill, "I had heard there was going to be some big things happening with B'Elanna and Tom. We've certainly had some powerful scenes this year, but I thought we were going to see some hot and heavy stuff. Maybe that's still yet to come. I think the fans would really like to see it. If we are going to have an ongoing relationship on the show, I know Roxann and I would both like to deal with it and see something kind of hot and interesting happen there."

Harry Kim fell in love with a re-animated crewmember in "Ashes to Ashes" and, as is always the case with "special guest" crew, he lost the girl. Despite rumors of a passionate kiss in the season six finale "Unimatrix Zero," Seven of Nine barely pressed lips with a guest star, putting the brakes on any relationship there. The only real couple that got any attention was off-screen, where Ryan and Brannon Braga made their private relationship public.

"Unimatrix Zero Part I" was not as strong an episode in ratings or with fans as its predecessor, "Dark Frontier." Season six as a whole showed a

decrease in ratings, as well as provoking increasing complaints from fans at conventions and on the Internet. UPN, however, finally showed an improvement in ratings due to the strong showing of WWF SMACKDOWN. By the end of the season, it seemed probable that UPN would survive as a station. The merged gi-

ants Viacom and CBS were allowed to keep UPN, to a large extent to encourage diversity. VOYAGER would play out its last season on the network of its birth.

As the season came to an end, the actors were already thinking about season seven and its implications. Said Picardo, "I am looking forward to our last season with a certain amount of trepidation. I have gotten used to having STAR TREK and having the regular opportunity to be challenged and interested as an actor. I'll be sad to see that go. On the other hand, I am very optimistic that we will be able to take all the wonderful characters we have created and the themes we have dealt with and reach a certain sense of closure with the audience."

"THE NEXT GENERATION series was finished in 'All Good Things...'

beautifully. I have hopes that we will be able to accomplish the same thing on VOYAGER, and have a very emotionally fulfilling closure to the show. We have a great cast. I hope everybody gets terrific outings as an actor next year. I know that coming home is a mixed bag for the Doctor. He's not actually coming home, because he doesn't have a home, other than Voyager. As we find out in 'Life Line,' the EMH Mark One has been reconfigured and reassigned to a far less impressive task than treating patients. So he has a very uncertain fu-



THE CAPTAIN PUTS HER HAIR UP: Janeway got physical in "Fair Haven" (top), riling those fans who despaired of ever seeing a hook-up with Chakotay (in center of above).

ture when they get home. I think that will raise some interesting issues. But I am really looking forward to our last year."

About the approaching season seven and its outcome, Tim Russ said, "It's something that is going to happen, regardless of how I feel about it. It's always bittersweet, because on one hand you'd like to get the opportunity to do other things, and have the freedom to do other things, after the show is over. On the other hand it's going to be the end of a job that's been very, very consistent for seven years. It's been like a place to call home, and for lot of actors that's not the case. Even doing a film for a certain amount of time, three months or four months, or two months or whatever it comes down to, it's still just a gig, you know? This one in essence is also just a gig, but it's a long one, and that makes a big difference."

SEASON SEVEN: THE CALL FOR CLOSURE

As the VOYAGER writing staff made the transition from season six to season seven, there were more changes in personnel. Joe Menosky said that he was leaving VOYAGER but hoped to return to the franchise at a later date. He would be missed by fans and colleagues. Said Fuller, "He's just such an amazing guy, and such a prolific

writer, in a way that no one else is on the staff. He has such a wide range of talent. It's going to be difficult to go on without him, but we will."

As season six ended, Braga and Berman continued to develop the next TREK series, and Ken Biller was ready to take control of the writing staff. Said Biller, "We've been breaking stories already for next season, and getting some stuff ready. It's a big job, but it's fun, and it's exciting."

"Brannon is probably the most imaginative guy that I have ever worked with. He brings a certain something to the show which I think has to do with the kind of startling visuals that his mind dreams up, and the kind of big, high-concept, science-fiction stories. Not that I don't love to do big, high-concept, science-fiction stories, but I come at stories a little bit differently than Brannon does. I tend to get interested in shows that are a little more issue-oriented sometimes. Not that I want to do a show that is preachy or full of intellectual platitudes. It's just a different approach that I have to coming at stories. So I hope that while the audience will continue to see lots of action and lots of really good science fiction, they will also be getting a good dosage of stories that are thought-provoking, that maybe take on some interesting contemporary themes. It will be the same show, the same actors, and the same cast, and hopefully the same mix of stuff that we always do."

By this time, personnel issues seemed to be resolved. Brannon Braga signed a three-year television deal to create, along with Berman, the next TREK series, as well as other projects for Paramount. This an-

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holoprogram, an old Irish town called "Fair Haven." Even the Captain visits, and meets the owner of the pub, Michael Sullivan (Fintan McKeown). Voyager is hit by a huge neutronic wavefront, which temporarily disables warp drive. To fend off nervousness, the Captain agrees to an open door policy for Fair Haven.

Said Braga, "I worked very closely with Robin on 'Fair Haven.' Any time there is a big Janeway episode like that, I try to have a hand in it. I thought it was a very charming episode, kind of racy. It was experimental, and it didn't work out, as we see in the sequel, 'Spirit Folk,' but it was doomed from the start."

"To hell with the Prime Directive. That man deserves an explanation."

—Tom Paris

BLINK OF AN EYE

★★★1/2

1/19/2000. Production #233. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Scott Miller & Joe Menosky. Story by Michael Taylor. Directed by Gabrielle Beaumont.

Voyager tries to take a look at an unusual planet with a tachyon core, but gets stuck in orbit. The ship's presence causes an imbalance in the tachyon field, and a time differential forms between Voyager and the planet: for every day that passes on the planet, only one second elapses on Voyager. As the Voyager crew watches, the planet quickly evolves. Within days, a primitive people develop into an industrial society, and astronomers try and make radio contact with Voyager. Janeway sends the Doctor down to covertly observe the civilization, but he is lost for a few minutes. By the time contact is re-established, the Doctor has made a life for himself on the planet, and has even fathered a child.

Said Braga about the script, "That was a very difficult script. It was a really, really tough concept to sell. But we were very pleased with it. It was a very ambitious episode. We did our best to depict the evolution of a civilization over the course of thousands of years. I thought it was fun to go from seeing primitive people to seeing space travel. It had a very large cast and lots of sets, special effects, a very high-concept show."

Daniel Dae Kim, best known to genre fans from CRUSADE, was very effective during his short time on screen.

"People have always fantasized about knowing celebrities personally. I suppose it's a way of making themselves feel more important."

—Captain Janeway

VIRTUOSO

★★1/2

1/26/2000. Production #234. Stardate 53556.4. Teleplay by Raf Green & Kenneth Biller. Story by Raf Green. Directed by Les Landau.

Voyager's technology accidentally damages a vessel from the very-advanced Komar. The Doctor tries to treat some minor injuries, but the aliens don't like him, until they hear him sing. A normally closed society, the Komar make an exception for a visit from Voyager, provided they can hear the Doctor sing. Soon, it seems that all of Komar wants to hear and meet the Doctor, who becomes quite taken with his growing fan base.

Said Ken Biller, "'Virtuoso' was a story that had been pitched to me the year before. When I came back, I thought, *I really want to do that story.* It's kind of a soft story. It's kind of a comedy. There's not a lot of science fiction to it. But it's a great story for the Doctor and can be a lot of fun."

Robert Picardo was bothered by the idea that the Doctor would decide to leave so easily... as were many viewers.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

FURY

Kes Returns With a Vengeance in this Thematically Dark, Technically Complex Episode

By Anna L. Kaplan

Fans, cast, and crew of STAR TREK: VOYAGER have long looked forward to the return of Jennifer Lien's Kes, the Ocampan who evolved into the next phase of her race's life at the end of "The Gift." Few, though, expected the reunion posited in "The Fury," in which an aged, vengeful Kes strove to wreak havoc upon Voyager in multiple timeframes, all in the name of short-circuiting her impending transformation. Prodigal returns? More like the Wrath of God was given pixie ears.

Executive producer Rick Berman started the process to bring Lien back. Said Berman, "Before we even sat down and worked out the story, we spoke to her and wanted to really be sure that she wouldn't be uncomfortable coming back. We also, I think, convinced her that it was a terrific story, and thus a good reason to bring Kes back. She came in and did a great job."

Berman received a story credit for "Fury," along with Brannon Braga. The teleplay was written by Michael Taylor and Bryan Fuller. Said Fuller, "Rick Berman wanted to bring her back. Rick made a phone call to Jennifer and said, 'Would you like to do the show again?' and she said, 'Yes.' He put it in the writing staff's hands to come up with an idea for her to come back. Brannon spearheaded the story, so it came out quite nicely."

Fuller explained, "Actually

the reason I got brought in to VOYAGER in the first place was to come up with a way to kill Kes off. I came up with the story for 'The Gift.' Her whole evolution into a different phase of Ocampan life was my idea. It was kind of fun that we decided to twist that. [It turns out that the transformation] wasn't all that it was cracked up to be. She evolved, and she just wasn't ready. It drove her a little crazy.

"Kes comes to Voyager as an old woman. We are very sur-

FEAR OF THE FUTURE: Before an insane Kes (Jennifer Lien, below) is finished, Torres is dead (right), and the fate of Voyager is imperiled.

prised to see her. She says, 'I want to come aboard.' What we don't realize is that she is coming back as a deranged Kes who wants vengeance on Voyager. She wants to get to the warp core, so she can use the power and harness it to send her back in time to Voyager's first days in the

Delta Quadrant. She is going to grab her younger self and send her back to Ocampa, so she'll be protected and safe. Tuvok from that time is picking up telepathically on her anachronistic qualities. He's picking up

Curry. Explained Fuller, "You see Kes using her mental abili-



on things that happened in the future that he should have no idea of. He's the one who unravels her plan."

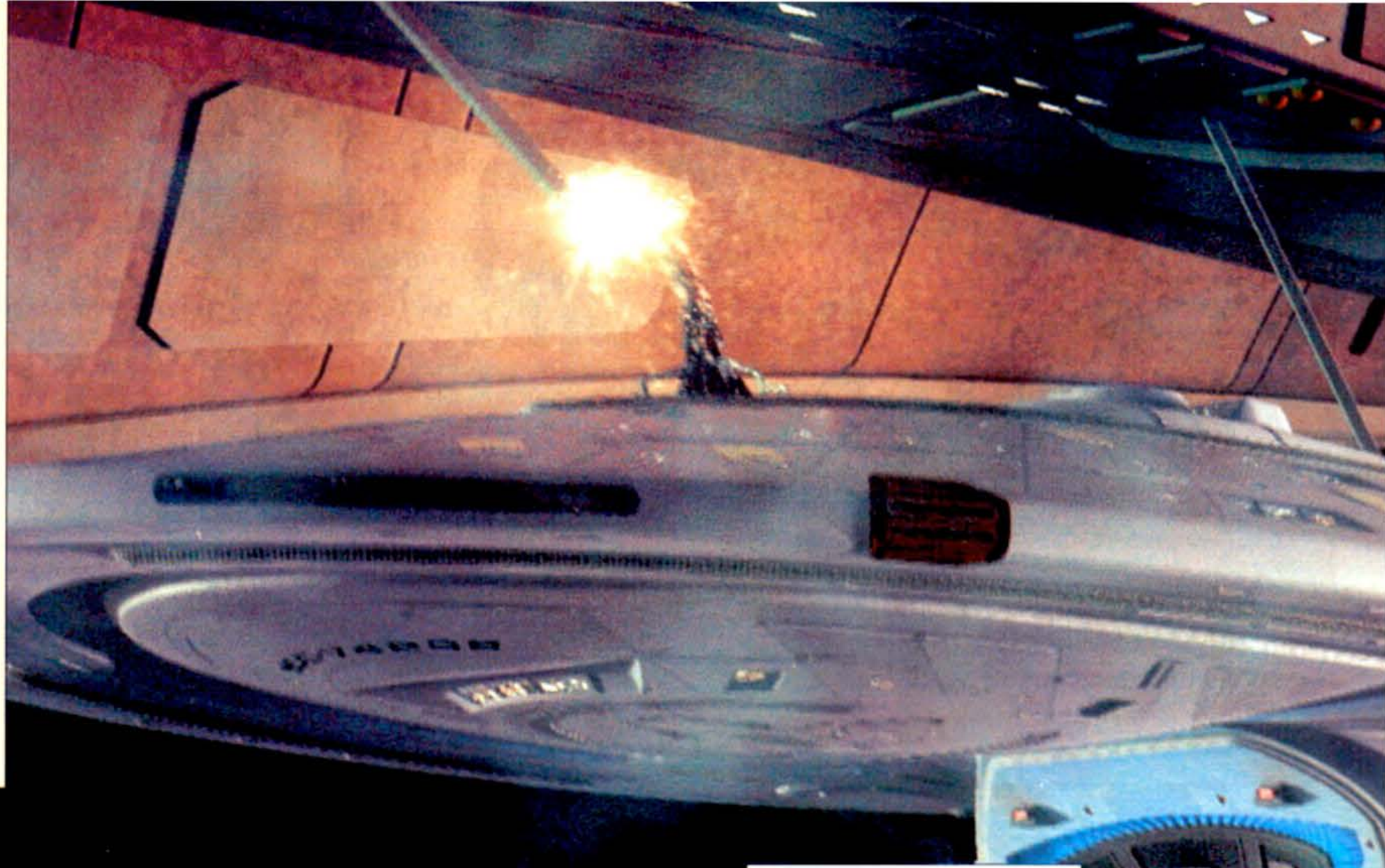
The success of the episode hung upon the work of supervisor Ronald B. Moore, and the visual effects department, under producer Dan

ties. She just comes on with a vengeance, and begins to burst through bulkheads, and kill crewmen, and there is just no stopping her when she gets on board."

The tasks for the visual effects team and director John Bruno included orchestrating explosions, putting multiple versions of Kes onscreen at the same time, and bringing the audience into uncomfortably close proximity with a Vidiian ship. Said Moore, "John Bruno is a friend of mine from way back—we first worked together on GHOSTBUSTERS. He directed VIRUS; he won an Academy Award for effects on ABYSS. It was fun to work with him because he is so knowledgeable on effects that it helps a great deal. We did a lot of green-screen work and split-screen; it was pretty complex. We didn't

get the entire script until after we'd started production. We didn't have quite a chance to plan this as far as we should."

The first challenge was putting more than one Kes on screen at a time. Said Moore, "We had three Keses actually—old Kes, young Kes, and future Kes, [which was what] we called the old Kes morphed into the young Kes. In



one scene, she goes up to the warp core, holds onto it, and sends a beam out, killing Torres. When we come back to her, she is in the past. She steps back and morphs from the old Kes into the young, future Kes.

"In the first unit plate, we had the future Kes, and we had to shoot greenscreen of the old Kes, who would then morph. It took a long time to change makeup and uniforms between one and the other. It wasn't that difficult to change from future Kes to young Kes, but it was difficult to change from old Kes to one of the other two. We would pick one, and we would have to shoot that green. Whatever uniform she was in that day we would shoot, and the other uniform we would shoot later.

"It was old Kes that we were going to shoot second unit, and we had future Kes on the stage

that day. We shot the warp core. You come onto the old Kes where she is going to flash in. Then she takes a step back and does a morph into future Kes. The camera keeps moving, goes right over her shoulder as Torres comes walking into engineering, and they talk. At that point we didn't have old Kes there; we had her as young Kes. Ultimately I decided to shoot it backwards."

To line the shots up, Moore used a device called "Cogswell" to simultaneously see the footage from first unit and match it with what they were shooting second unit. He explained, "A lot of times, there's a week between when we shoot first unit and when we come back and shoot second unit. When we have Cogswell video, we can match the old Kes to the young Kes. That is where the morph would have to take place.

"We'd hold the frame of the plate we shot with young Kes first unit. We'd match the position, then have her step forward to the warp core, which was backwards. The grips built a fake green model of the warp core where she could put her hands into a position that matched. When I got into the edit bay I ran it backwards. Everything lined up, and we did a position line-up for the

morph. Shooting it backwards made the most sense, but it was hard on Jennifer.

"Another sequence where we had old Kes on first unit was the sequence where a hologram of past Kes confronts the old Kes in engineering... We had to shoot old Kes only, and every scene that had young Kes had to be shot later second unit.

"We would shoot [the sequence] with the stand-in, so we have old Kes and the stand-in working together. We would get the timing, get the dialogue all worked out. Then we would shoot it without the stand-in. When we went back to second unit, we could run the reference plates that we shot with the stand-in back for Jennifer. Then we would shoot her against green, and ultimately composite it. It became a very complex show for us because of that."

"We did stuff beyond what we have done before," Moore added. "There are a couple of scenes where we completely created a Voyager corridor in CG. At one point, Kes comes walking down a corridor and all the walls are exploding and buckling and blowing up behind her. All of that was done CG. We shot her green on a treadmill.

"The other part of the show was the CGI work, which was

TASTE OF THE PAST: Ronald Moore commissioned Digital Muse to create a dynamic, CG staging of a Vidiian attack.

[handled by] Digital Muse, Bruce Branit doing the

CG supervising. Kes is angry with Janeway, she's angry with Voyager, and she tries to sell us off to the Vidiians again. She sends a message and they come out and they come up next to Voyager.

"One of the ships comes on top of us and extends tubes down, to connect to the Voyager. We have done this before, but I didn't like the tubes that were used. We decided to do it a little bit differently. Now, we have three pylons that come out of the bottom of the Vidiian ship, clamp onto the Voyager, and tear open a hole. They now have conduits going between the two ships, and that is how they are invading us. There is a grappling hook that comes up and grabs ahold of the front of the Voyager. You can see the metal bend a little bit as it grabs ahold and opens up like a can opener.

"When we try and get away later, the Voyager starts to bounce up and down and pivot, and finally breaks one of these tubes open. Voyager moves forward and [the tube] rips a big section out of the side of Voyager as this arm pulls loose. We see decks underneath, and it all explodes. I am very, very happy with that."

CFQ

"If this massacre really happened, someone is to blame. I want to be certain that it wasn't us."
—Captain Janeway

MEMORIAL

★★★

2/2/2000. Production #236. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Robin Burger. Story by Brannon Braga. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

Harry, Paris, Chakotay, and Neelix return from an away mission. Back on Voyager, Tom has a vivid dream of being in battle. Harry has an anxiety attack in a Jefferies tube, and Chakotay also dreams of a battle in which many people are killed. When Neelix starts to hallucinate and holds Naomi Wildman hostage, it becomes clear that something happened on the away mission.

This episode could have been taken from the headlines, specifically recent accounts of a Korean War incident called "No Gun Ri." Said Braga, "I thought that show had a good concept: the idea that the crew begins to experience Vietnam-style flashbacks. It's about more than post-traumatic-stress disorder. It's about memorials, and the controversial nature of memorials. Although I think in the end the story was a bit predictable, it was very well-directed and especially well-acted. I thought it was a good STAR TREK morality tale."

"The idea of killing someone for the entertainment of others is detestable."
—Seven of Nine

TSUNKATSE

★★★

2/9/2000. Production #232. Stardate 53447.2. Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Gannon Kenney. Directed by Mike Vejar.

Seven and Tuvok decide to have "fun" by watching a micronebula collapse. Their shuttle comes under attack, Tuvok is injured, and when Seven awakens, she finds they both are aboard the ship of Penk (Jeffrey Combs), promoter of the martial-arts sport Tsunkatse. He gives Seven a choice: Fight in the games, or let the injured Tuvok fight and die.

"Tsunkatse" was the highest-rated show of the sixth season, a feat many suspected was accomplished through the cross-over casting of WWF SMACKDOWN star the Rock (Berman in fact went all-out in guest-casting, also bringing in J.G. Hertzler (DS9's Martok), and Jeffrey Combs (Weyoun and Brunt, also from DS9)). Said Braga, "I thought 'Tsunkatse' rocked. We wanted to do a sport, we wanted to do some kick-ass action. That was the most difficult show of the year to produce. Mike Vejar is a great director, and he directed the two absolutely most difficult shows, 'Barge of the Dead' and 'Tsunkatse.'"

"In this one, he had to shoot fight scenes. We wanted these fight scenes to be good. We brought in a movie-level, stunt fight coordinator [James Lew], and we really paid a lot of attention to how those fight sequences were going to turn out. We built a great set. I thought it was nice breath of fresh air. There was a little bit of a commentary on the phenomenon of violent sports like wrestling, but not enough to be pretentious, just enough to have a little fun."

"The Borg received your message but chose to ignore it. They consider you irrelevant."
—Seven of Nine

COLLECTIVE

★★1/2

2/16/2000. Production #235. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Michael Taylor. Story by Andrew Shepard Price & Mark Gaberman. Directed by Allison Liddi.

Harry, Neelix, Tom, and Chakotay are on board the Flyer when a Borg cube appears before

nouncement, in July of 2000, coincided with a more active phase of work on the series, although details remained secret. Explained Biller, "Brannon's focus is shifting. It's not that he is doing nothing on VOYAGER. He is providing services, but more limited services than he has provided in the past. He's not doing the day-to-day running of the show. I am doing that."

Biller, as executive producer, was running the writing staff and producing the show, along with Rick Berman. He described his staff, saying, "I hired a supervising producer, a writer named James Kahn. He was actually on MELROSE PLACE for the last four seasons, but prior to that he worked on TEKWAR. He's done a lot of science fiction stuff prior to his MELROSE PLACE stint. Bryan Fuller has been promoted to co-producer. He's been working very hard with

NEXT WEEK, VINCE MCMAHON AS A TALOSIAN: The Rock fought for glory, and ruffled the feathers of the faithful, in "Tsunkatse."



Raf Green, who is still on staff. Rob Doherty has been promoted to story editor. Michael Taylor has been promoted to executive story editor."

In addition, Mike Sussman, who received story credit for "Unimatrix Zero" and "The Haunting of Deck Twelve," joined the writing staff, partnering with Phyllis Strong.

The staff was already hard at work in July and August of 2000. "Unimatrix Zero, Part II" was written by Braga and Menosky, and resolved the issues of "Part I." Said Braga, "Joe had left VOYAGER at that

point, but we got together every day at my house and wrote 'Part II.' I think it's better than 'Part I,' which is atypical. Usually the first parts of these things are a little crisper than 'Part II.' 'Part I' is usually a lot of set up. 'Part II,' you've got to figure everything out, how to end it."

More viewers actually tuned in to "Unimatrix Zero, Part II," the debut of VOYAGER's seventh season, than had seen "Part I." It was the strongest season opener since "Scorpion Part II." Ultimately, it led to a tragedy of sorts. "Janeway has to destroy Unimatrix Zero," Braga explained. "The wonderful kind of cyberspace where [the Borg] could live as individuals is gone, and along with it, of course, tragically and bittersweetly, Seven's only chance to see this man she loves ever again. So

that ends tragically. But on the upside, all the drones have retained their individuality, and the fight, the resistance, will go on. We leave it on a question mark, as to what will happen. The

Collective is alive and well, but as long as these 40,000 drones exist, who knows what might happen?"

The Delta Flyer, which was destroyed in "Part I" was rebuilt for the third episode of the season, titled "Drive," which was actually filmed before the second episode, "Imperfection." "Drive" not only launched the new Delta Flyer, it also began a season-long arc devoted to taking Tom Paris and B'Elanna Torres into the serious adult waters of marriage and parenthood. The two celebrated nuptials at the end of "Drive," so that careful viewers will notice a few discrepancies with the two episodes. Said Bryan Fuller, "'Drive' was actually filmed first, but the studio always likes to kick off the season with a Seven of Nine episode, because she is one of our highest-rated characters, so we did 'Imperfection.' 'Imperfection' was switched with 'Drive.'"

Actually you'll notice in 'Imperfection' that Torres and Paris both have rings on, and at the beginning of 'Drive' they are talking about the refitting and rebuilding of the Delta Flyer. In 'Imperfection' it was already built and ready to go. So if you have an eagle eye, you will notice those little details, such as the wedding rings."

Paying more attention to Tom and B'Elanna's relationship was one of the goals Biller set for the seventh season. He asked early in the year, "What are the major arcs for our characters that have been put into motion over the series? How can we,

not wrap up everything neatly in a bow, but how can we bring some resolution to the relationships and the character arcs that have been put in motion over the course of the series?" This was somewhat surprising question to hear from an executive producer of VOYAGER.

The answers formed the nuggets of many season-seven episodes. Said Biller about Tom and B'Elanna, "One of the things that we are going to do this season is explore that relationship and see really where it goes. We've ignored it for awhile, and we are not going to ignore it this year. We are going to embrace it. There are going to be probably about four or five episodes over the course of the twenty-six-episode season which will touch on that relationship and the progress of that relationship."

After getting married in "Drive," the two characters soon faced the reality of parenthood. Said Fuller, "We wanted B'Elanna and Paris to get married, because we were going to have this arc over the course of season seven with them getting married, getting pregnant, and then eventually having the baby. We had to kick that off right off the bat, otherwise she was going to have a baby within months of being married. There is still a kind of conservative attitude toward some of those issues at STAR TREK, so she couldn't get pregnant without being married, so we had to get that ball rolling."

Biller had ideas for some of the other characters, some arcs for the season and some for single episodes that addressed overlooked issues. For example, he said, "Harry Kim is a guy who has been an ensign for six years. When he joined Starfleet, I'm sure he figured that after being in for six or seven years he would have progressed beyond that. I'm sure he had a dream of captaining a starship. If Voyager never makes it home, that's really never going to happen for him. He's sort of hit a ceiling. Where is he going to go? So we are doing an episode in which Harry Kim ends up getting command of an alien starship and really play out what it means to him to have an opportunity to pursue that dream." That idea became the nucleus for "Nightingale."

As for Seven of Nine, Biller continued, "We asked ourselves, where is Seven going to go this season? I think Brannon was the one that had come up with the idea of what would happen if Seven had to face her own death? That would be something that



RETURN FROM THE GRAVE: A transformed crew member (Kim Rhodes, above and at left below) poses an emotional crisis for Harry Kim in "Ashes to Ashes."

would force her to face her own humanity or her limitations. It was the beginning of a season-long arc for her, as she got closer and closer to accepting who she was, and being a human, and what the limitations of that are. Obviously that was played out in 'Unimatrix.' In ['Imperfection'], Seven has to confront the possibility of her own death, which she never really had to do before. As a Borg, the concept of individual death didn't really exist. She ends up with a fatal condition, and you'll see Seven more emotional in that show than we have ever seen her before."

Biller added, "We are going to be taking the Doctor to the brink, too. The Doctor has been obviously exploring his own humanity through the course of the series, and his struggle for holographic rights. We are going to bring him front and center and up against that very issue in the big two-hour movie, which is called 'Flesh and Blood.'"

This episode, the first of the three season seven two-parters, brought back the Hirogen aliens from "The Killing Game."



them. When they are attacked, Harry goes down below to do repairs. They are caught in a tractor beam and when Chakotay, Paris, and Neelix awaken, they find themselves in a Borg assimilation chamber. Unable to find Harry, the trio do uncover evidence of botched assimilations.

Voyager finds the Borg cube, which is not behaving as expected. Seven discovers that the cube carries only five drones, who offer to exchange their prisoners for Voyager's navigational deflector. When Seven goes to the cube, she finds that the five Borg are young children, their leader a teenager (Ryan Spahn). It turns out that their maturation chambers opened prematurely, and they don't know why the other Borg died.

Said Braga, "I had a real affinity for this concept. I wanted to deal with youth violence. I wanted to use Borg children as a metaphor. I don't think the episode turned out as well as it should have. I thought the kids looked a little silly. I didn't feel we tapped into the depth of the issues that we needed to, with how the Collective shaped these kids' minds. I don't think we hit the metaphors for youth violence that we should have hit."

"If you ask me, that whole program is an accident waiting to happen. You've been running Fair Haven around the clock."

—B'Elanna Torres.

SPIRIT FOLK

★★

2/23/2000, Production #237, Stardate unknown. Written by Bryan Fuller. Directed by David Livingston.

Tom Paris drives an automobile into the restored town of Fair Haven. When Seamus (Richard Riehle) sees him call the computer for a new wheel, the holographic lifeform thinks that maybe the spirit folk have come to take over Fair Haven. Soon Seamus and his pal Milo (Ian Abercrombie) are in Michael's pub, talking about seeing people disappear and the weather changing with a wish.

Said Fuller, "It was fun to write characters who can behave in ways that aren't in the vein with our traditional, Starfleet, upstanding characters. To do a light, rompy romance and to get away from space anomalies was a joy. A little respite goes a long way, so writing 'Spirit Folk' was essentially like getting a big re-charge for me. The cow gag was a blast. The holodeck practical jokes were a lot of fun to write. But sometimes those work, sometimes they don't work. I've talked to a lot of people who liked it, and then I look on the Internet and people are hating it."

"It's everyone's fantasy to hear their own eulogy."

—Ensign Lyndsay Ballard (Kim Rhodes)

ASHES TO ASHES

★★1/2

3/01/2000, Production #238, Stardate 53679.4, Teleplay by Robert Doherty. Story by Ronald Wilkerson. Directed by Terry Windell.

An alien in a shuttlecraft hails Voyager. She says she is Ensign Lyndsay Ballard, a crew member killed years ago on an away mission. The Captain allows her to come on board. The Doctor says that despite her alien appearance, she does have traces of Ballard's DNA. Lyndsay explains that an alien race, the Kobali, reproduce by salvaging the dead of other races, resequencing their DNA and integrating them into families. But Ballard never forgot her human existence, and once she gained the trust of her Kobali family, she stole a shuttle and tracked down Voyager. Ensign Kim, having once missed out on a romance

with Ballard, declares his love. But the relationship is placed at risk once Ballard's Kobali father arrives to reclaim her.

Said Doherty, "In [Wilkerson's] original story, two of the crew members who died in the pilot episode of VOYAGER—I believe the original doctor and the original helmsmen—return. We thought they had been dead for six years, but they actually were re-animated. It was a little tough to buy, because we have certainly tried to paint on the show that it's tough to get through the Delta Quadrant. To make the time issues a little more believable, I think we said Lyndsay was gone two or three years. Ultimately we were just happy to make it a Kim story and invent this person who was very important to him several years ago."

Added Biller, "It was an unusual episode for us because it was an episode that focused on the guest character. We tried to make it a bit of a Kim story, by giving Kim a former relationship with this woman. I think Garrett gave a nice performance, and I think the guest actress did a nice job. The Kobali, I thought the makeup people did a really great job on them."

"I'm not prepared to return Icheb to parents who may be as careless as my own."
—Seven of Nine.

CHILD'S PLAY

★★★

3/08/2000. Production #239. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Raf Green. Story by Paul Brown. Directed by Mike Vejar.

The children of Voyager put on a science fair, under the guidance of Seven, with the oldest, Icheb (Manu Inraymi), showing much promise in Astrometrics. Captain Janeway announces that she has made contact with Icheb's parents on the planet Brunali, and he must return to them.

Seven is unhappy—the Brunali planet has been attacked repeatedly by the Borg, and the survivors have been left with a poor, agrarian society. Icheb arrives on the planet to meet his parents, but he doesn't remember them or want to give up his life on Voyager. Seven is hostile and argumentative, saying not only that Icheb cannot develop to his full potential with his parents, but implying that they cannot protect him from the Borg.

Said Biller, "That was maybe my favorite episode of the year. It turned out to be an episode about the Elian Gonzalez case, this Cuban kid who is in America. Does he go back to Cuba where he doesn't have all of the creature comforts and all of the opportunities that America affords him? Once we got these Borg kids on the ship, we started developing this relationship that Seven has with these kids. The idea that she had bonded maternally with them created an opportunity to explore another aspect of her character and her humanity, her sense of protectiveness over these kids, and her attitude that this kid was much better off staying with her than going back with his parents. It allowed us to dig into and explore some of those issues about what's really important for a kid's development. Is it just parental love, or is it more than that?"

"Three people have slipped through the cracks on my ship. That makes it my problem."
—Captain Janeway

GOOD SHEPHERD

★★★

3/15/2000. Production #240. Stardate 53753.2. Teleplay by Dianna Gito & Joe Menosky. Story by Dianna Gito. Directed by Winrich Kolbe.

Seven of Nine is preparing efficiency ratings. By her standards, it seems that almost everyone is failing to utilize resources or personnel to peak efficiency. She cites three crewmembers as worst-case examples: William Tefler (Michael Reisz), a hypochondriac who wastes the Doctor's time; Tal Celes (Zoe McLellan), a sensor analyst who's suffering a severe crisis of confidence; and highly intelligent Mortimer Harren (Jay Underwood), who works on calculations while hiding on deck fifteen—the very bottom of the ship. Playing the good shepherd, Janeway makes it her duty to take

Janeway had given them holographic technology so that they could hunt holograms instead of living beings. In "Flesh and Blood" she discovered that they had modified the holograms to the point that they were self-aware and able to feel pain. They were fighting back against the Hirogen, and they recruited the Doctor to their cause. He betrays the Captain, but returns to Voyager in the end, repentant. His struggle for individual rights continued through the season, and in "Author, Author," Janeway finally admitted that he deserved those rights.

Janeway spent seven years handing out things and trading to keep the ship going, and no doubt would be held accountable by Starfleet, a situation she would confront as Voyager headed home. Said Biller, "Of course, Janeway's arc for the season, which has been her arc for the series, is her nearly obsessive quest to get her ship home. We will have to see how far she will actually go to do it. We know that she is extremely single-minded about that. We are going to explore that for Janeway."

As far as the other characters, Neelix got very little airtime, something actor Ethan Phillips minded surprisingly little. He laughed, "When I put the makeup on the first season, I said to Rick Berman, 'It's not too bad.' He said, 'You have to wait four years.' And he's right. It's gotten to be very tedious, very sticky and hot, and it's hard to put up with four-and-a-half to five hours of makeup, and then a twelve- to fourteen-hour day of acting. I used to wish that I had more to do on the show, and now I am grateful that I don't have all that much." Neelix departed the Voyager crew officially in "Homestead," finding a colony of Talaraxians that needed his help.

Tim Russ also had a fairly easy season. "Repression" focused on his ability to solve a crime in which he had become a suspect. He had some important scenes in "Workforce," and key roles in other episodes. Noted Russ, "Season seven is actually going very smoothly. Shooting the show has always been a routine. It doesn't change much from year to year. My character hasn't gone through any special changes since the 'Workforce' two-part show."

Robert Beltran had become VOYAGER's most vocal critic among the actors, but wound up doing quite a bit more work during season seven than in the past. He admitted to enjoying "Shattered," "Workforce," "Natural Law," and to a lesser extent, "Human Error." These last two paired

Chakotay up with Seven, leading to a surprise romance in the finale. Said Beltran when asked whether season seven had been good for Chakotay, "Yes, it has turned out to be. I'm happy about it."

As the season progressed, it was clear that Biller, true to his words, was exploring character arcs as well as addressing the kinds of timely issues he felt were important for any STAR TREK series. The arc of B'Elanna and Tom's marriage, and B'Elanna's pregnancy played all through the season, in everything from short scenes to entire episodes. One of the season's strongest episodes, "Lineage," dealt directly with the issue. When a routine scan reveals that the baby girl will have Klingon ridges, B'Elanna has to come to terms with the idea that her Klingon genes will be passed on to her child. B'Elanna contemplates removing her



Klingon DNA, but is prevented in the end by her husband and his love for her.

"Lineage," written by James Kahn, was a favorite of Biller and of Roxann Dawson. Said Biller, "I loved the episode. I think we did what we do best, which is to take an interesting, contemporary

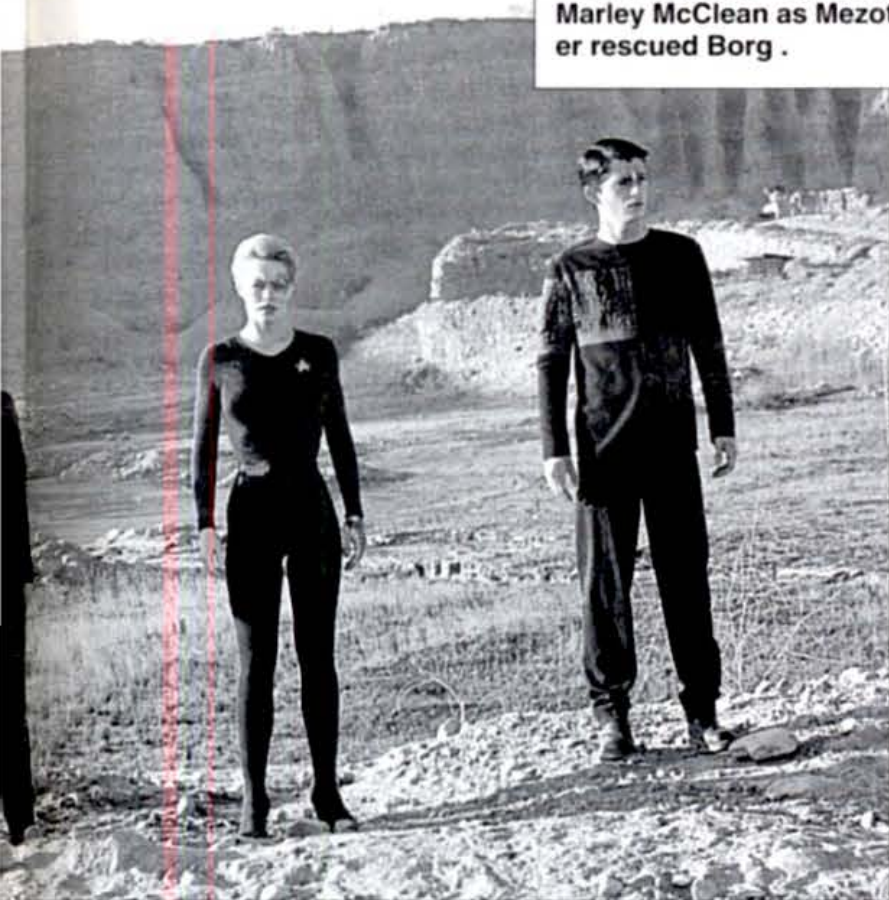
issue—in this case fetal manipulation, something that's really in the news today—and use it to tell a high-concept, science-fiction story that also really gets under the skin of one of our characters. I thought that the performance from Roxann Dawson was really extraordinary, and that we had a level of emotional intensity in that show that we don't get on STAR TREK that often."

Added Dawson, "It was an episode that moved me terribly when I read it. I am very proud of it. I think the issues that it addresses are timely and original and identifiable. There are very few scripts in my life that I actually weep while I am reading them. I don't even know if there was another one.

This one was so well-written. The second and third time I read through it, I was weeping, it was so beautiful. I just hope that we were able to bring that to the screen."

Seven survived her brush with death in "Imperfection" with the help of the Doctor and Icheb. She explored her humanity more fully in "Human Error," where she learned that a Borg implant may prevent her from ever experiencing strong emotions. Throughout the season, Seven seemed to be making progress towards individuality, even speaking with a relative of Annika

HOW AL GORE LOST THE ELECTION: The return of a Borg teen (Manu Intiraymi on right below) to his ravaged home world mirrored the Elian Gonzales crisis in "Child's Play." Opposite page: Marley McClean as Mezoti, another rescued Borg.



Hansen in "Author, Author." Surprisingly, in the finale it was revealed that Seven would eventually overcome her Borg implants and marry Chakotay.

Still early in the season, Biller was hoping to bring back other familiar guests, including Troi and Barclay. He said, "We have an episode called 'Inside Man,' in which we will see both of those characters. Barclay's ongoing efforts to try to help his long-distance pen-pals get home, that's going to go awry in a funny way. We will probably see him more than once during the course of the season, because he will be continuing to try to help Voyager get home. We probably will not see the Borg again until the very end of the season, and we may be seeing some other kind of old friends that we have met over the years in the Delta Quadrant and play some of those things out."

Biller did bring Marina Sirtis and Dwight Schultz back for "Inside Man." Barclay was also seen later in the season as communication with Earth became easier. Other "old friends" popped up all year. Seska (Martha Hackett) returned for the time-travelling "Shattered." Other guest stars returned for brief appearances, giving a sem-

blance of continuity to a show that eschewed continuity most of the time. Josh Clark reprised the role of Lieutenant Carey just long enough to be killed in "Friendship One." Alex Enberg's Vorik was on screen in the penultimate episode, "Renaissance Man." John de Lancie returned to play Q for possibly the last time in "Q Two."

"Q Two" was a story Biller had been thinking about for a long time. He laughed, "When we had about six or seven episodes left to figure out what we were going to do, Rick Berman and I sat down and started gabbing. 'Okay this is our last chance to do certain things. What do we want to do?' I said, 'Well, we can always do a Q show.' He said, 'You know, I love John de Lancie, and the audience loves him, and I'd love to have him back.' I said, 'Well, here's a story that you never heard, Rick.' I told him the story that was actually a story that I came up with in the third season after I wrote 'The Q and the Gray,' in which Q has a child. I had pitched a story where this child comes back as a rambunctious adolescent that is very dangerous, that the Continuum can't control. When I told the bare bones of the story to Rick, he really loved it, and he said, 'We should absolutely do that show.' He has teenage kids, and I just became a father this year, so these are things that we think about."

As a bonus, the young Q was played by John de Lancie's real son, Keegan. Said Biller, "Rick had seen Keegan de Lancie in an episode of... I believe it was ALLY MCBEAL, and he said, 'You should really call that kid in and see if he can do this part, because it would really be great to have a father and a son.' So we brought Keegan in, and he read the part. The producers read about fifteen actors for the role. I am sure [casting director] Ron Surma read many, many more than that. Keegan was just clearly the best. It was a real pleasure to see the two of them together."

Another idea that Biller wanted to pursue made its way into "Workforce," a two-parter for the February sweeps. In this episode, the crew of Voyager is forced off the ship, and taken to a planet that needs workers. Each person's memory is wiped and partially reprogrammed. Although they retain their names and personalities, they think that they are actually people who are supposed to be living and working on the planet. Explained Biller, "What I liked about 'Workforce' was that, for the Captain, it allowed her and the audience to ask themselves the question, 'Is there a simpler kind of life that would be a nicer, happier, more satisfying life than the very pressure-filled, lonely life of a cap-

the reluctant trio on an away mission in the Delta Flyer to study a Class T cluster. Nothing, of course, goes according to plan.

Said Braga, "We really needed a good Janeway show. Joe had a really interesting idea. When Voyager got lost in the Delta Quadrant, there were probably going to be some personnel changes. Not everybody has a successful career on a starship. But people just kind of got stuck. Some people might have fallen through the cracks. Who are those people? It was the perfect show to do in the sixth season, and a really good issue for the Captain to deal with."

"Posing as a Starfleet captain, selling memberships to the Federation. Too bad we didn't think of it, Tuvok." —Captain Janeway

LIVE FAST AND PROSPER

★★1/2

4/19/2000. Production #242. Stardate 53849.2. Written by Robin Burger. Directed by LeVar Burton.

Someone who calls herself Captain Janeway and another who calls himself Tuvok are talking miners into trading dilithium for bolomite. They outwit the miners, transport the bolomite to the alleged "Delta Flyer," and get away without giving the miners anything.

On Voyager, systems all over the ship are malfunctioning, due to a heating coil Neelix traded from someone who claimed to need food for starving orphans. Orek (Dennis Cockrum), the mining supervisor, hails Voyager, demanding the return of his dilithium and mentioning that Janeway told him she was going off to feed some orphans. The Captain realizes that someone is impersonating her and Tuvok. When questioned, Neelix tells the story of a meeting between himself, Tom, and the "clerics" Dala (Kaitlin Hopkins) and Mobar (Greg Daniel), who apparently pulled a fast one on Tom and Neelix. Janeway convinces Orek to help find the con artists, who are selling memberships in the Federation to anyone that will pay.

Kaitlin Hopkins would be best known to DEEP SPACE NINE viewers as the Vorta in "The Ship." For the VOYAGER episode, Hopkins had to create a number of personae. She said, "I play an alien in this episode who is a con artist. I pretend to be the Captain, and I pretend to be a cleric, and I pretend to be different people in different situations. I created Dala, the con artist—a little rough around the edges, petulant, edgy. I impersonate Captain Janeway to the best of Dala's ability, based on what she knows. Some of it is accurate, some of it is a little off, a little wrong, which is I think kind of funny. [Dala has] never actually met [Janeway]; it can't be too accurate an impersonation: My communicator is too big; the outfit is not exactly the same; and the wig is not quite right. I am piecing together bits of information and data—it's sort of an odd approximation of Captain Janeway."

"I believe the right kind of play can turn the mind from violent thoughts. The perfect play might even stop a war."

—Kelis (Joseph Will).

MUSE

★★★

4/26/2000. Production #244. Stardate 53918. Written by Joe Menosky. Directed by Mike Vejar.

The Delta Flyer crashes on a planet, and Torres is captured by the playwright Kelis, who thinks she is an "Eternal" who will serve as inspiration for his plays. She talks him into freeing her, then chases him away with a phaser. When she cannot get power to contact Voyager, B'Elanna lets Kelis into the Flyer, offering to trade stories for food.

Said executive story editor Bryan Fuller, "The episode that Joe wrote called 'Muse' is a Torres story, and it is just absolutely delightful. It's kind of our version of SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE. It's one of my favorite episodes of the season, because it is so rich. It is all about STAR TREK storytelling, and you get to see B'Elanna in a new light."

"In three years I am going to leave Voyager in search of higher things, because you encouraged me to do it... I wasn't ready for what I found."

—Kes (Jennifer Lien)

FURY

★★★

5/03/2000. Production # 243. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Bryan Fuller & Michael Taylor. Story by Rick Berman & Brannon Braga. Directed by John Bruno.

A small ship hails Janeway. It's Kes, asking for permission to board. Instead, Kes rams the ship and transports over. With bulkheads blowing out behind her, she heads to engineering. She kills B'Elanna, then uses the power from the warp core to regain her youth and transport back in time. She arrives on Voyager as the ship is being threatened by the Vidiians, fifty-six days after being pulled into the Delta Quadrant. As Janeway and the crew plan evasive tactics, future Kes contacts the Vidiians and offers tactical data from Voyager in exchange for safe passage to Ocampa.

See *The Making of 'Fury,'* page 32.

"I think Doctor Zimmerman will be very interested to see what I've learned. He probably never imagined what one of his own creations could accomplish."

—The Doctor

LIFE LINE

★★★

5/10/2000. Production #241. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Robert Doherty & Raf Green and Brannon Braga. Story by John Bruno and Robert Picardo. Directed by Terry Windell.

The Doctor gets a letter from Reg Barclay, telling him that his creator, Dr. Zimmerman, is ill and dying. Feeling responsible for the welfare of his "father," the Doctor convinces Captain Janeway that he alone can save Zimmerman. His program is compressed and he is sent back to the Alpha Quadrant.

VOYAGER's visual-effects team received an Emmy nomination for "Life Line." Said effects supervisor Ronald B. Moore, "There was just page after page after page of these two guys. The whole thing about the Doctor and Zimmerman is they are going to trade quips, and they had to be in each other's face. To try and do this whole thing without moving a camera, or moving it in a subtle amount like we did with Kes [in 'Fury'], just wasn't going to cut it. We wanted freedom so that they could walk around each other if they so desired, and keep the camera moving along. So for the first time in many years for STAR TREK, we brought motion control onto the set.

"We had four days on the set, half of our production time, with motion control. Terry decided to use a track, get the motion control set up, and try to get

tain on a quest?" That's a story I wanted to tell for several years. We finally did it this year."

All in all, Biller seemed to think that the season had gone well as VOYAGER headed into the final stretch. Although filming had wrapped by the time we were able to reach him, the viewers had not yet seen the last eight episodes. Said Biller, "I think it's really for the audience to decide, but I feel very pleased with the shows that we did. I think we did a really strong season with a really good mix of shows. We did some very moving shows, and some very funny shows, and some very big, exciting, action shows. I think we really spread around the wealth in terms of exploring the characters, and giving the characters some big moments in the final season. I am very proud of it. I hope the audience agrees. I was saying at the beginning of the season that we saved the best for last, and I hope that we did, but again, the audience will decide that."

Mulgrew also thought that season seven was a winner, with more adult storylines. She noted that along with an adult sensibility she saw, "a confidence, I think, certainly [in] the writing. If it's not on the page, it's not going to happen. It was on the page."

She added, about season seven, "This is our best. You could look at that in any number of ways, but I would say, happily, we went out with a real bang. Every story seemed to work. Each member of the ensemble was featured."

WHO'S THE REAL ALIEN? Below, left: Kate Mulgrew and Brannon Braga (pointing) confer with a friendly (we hope) Borg. Below: Sadly, UPN execs preferred the ENTERPRISE concept over the more intriguing STAR TREK: THE NUTTIEST WARP CORE TECHNICIAN.

From day one of the seventh season, Biller, the writing staff, the actors, and everyone involved with VOYAGER thought about how and when the ship might get home during its last season. Biller said early on, "How do you both satisfy the audience and also defy their expectations? Obviously the entire series has been about the crew trying to get home. So there is an expected conclusion to that. How do we both not disappoint the audience? How do we let the audience feel like the characters they have followed all these years have succeeded, and yet how to we still manage to surprise them, so that what they see is not predictable and exactly what they expect?"

We will hopefully do something exciting and



surprising that the audience does not quite expect."

All of the actors stated repeatedly that they did not know what was going to happen in the finale until the script arrived, just before shooting. At the beginning of the year, many were hoping for time back on Earth to explore the implications of their return home. Said Dawson, "I think we should get back to the Alpha Quadrant, although that hasn't been stated firmly and definitively yet. But it seems that we should, that there is a lot of opportunity there. Whether we arrive, though, in the last episode and don't have time to explore that, or we arrive in the final three episodes and explore it a little is still up for grabs."

Added Tim Russ, "I've always said getting back home would be both good and bad. It will be very dramatic and exciting to return to Earth, and it has been the focus of our journey. But by the same token, the show will no longer be the VOYAGER of the series, as we will no longer be on our own in the far side of the Galaxy, making new discoveries."

Said Mulgrew, "I won't be told until the bitter end. They literally do not share this with us. I think they themselves at this point do not know. There are so many different possibilities. Do we get the ship home safely? Does that open up endless opportunities for other poignant stories? Does somebody sacrifice himself or herself? I really don't know. There is always the outside chance that we may shoot it two or three ways."

"I have been all over the place with this one emotionally myself. Should somebody die? I suppose somebody must go down. But the other part of me wants to say that we've had such a ride, it would be interesting to get home, and get home in time to look at the other stories which would unfold as the natural by-product of us getting home. What does this do to Chakotay and the Maquis? What does this do to Tom Paris, and B'E-lanna Torres, who is now pregnant? Certainly what does this do to Seven of Nine? I think it's pretty intriguing—those possibilities. On the other hand, I want an epic ending."

As the season progressed and time ran out, all involved realized the Voyager's inevitable return home would all be wrapped up in the final two hours. Not only did the actors not know until the last moment what would happen, most of the writing staff was kept in the dark.

Said Picardo, "We have heard little hints but we are not supposed to talk about it. I really don't know what the story is. I know there is some playing with time frames, and I know that a very famous villain may reappear, but I won't say from which of the franchises. I think they may well be putting out disinformation, because it's their only recourse. Even what I've heard could easily be disinformation."

After the finale was filmed, bits and pieces of information leaked out in interviews, on television news shows, and on the Internet. Speculation about the finale was eclipsed only by the intense interest in the fifth TREK series, which was supposed to start production as VOYAGER finished airing. The new series was ex-

RESISTANCE IS POSSIBLE: A world where Borg can live as individuals is posited and threatened in "Unimatrix Zero."



pected to be a prequel, about a spaceship called Enterprise and its adventures before the Federation was actually established. Adding fuel to the fire, the last few episodes of VOYAGER included dialogue in which characters discussed the years after Zephram Cochran made first contact with the Vulcans. By the time the finale aired, the new show, ENTERPRISE, had been announced.

By the time "Endgame"—story by Rick Berman, Ken Biller, and Brannon Braga; teleplay by Ken Biller and Rob Doherty—made its way to television viewers, the entire plot had been spoiled on the Internet. Still, the faithful enjoyed watching VOYAGER return to Earth *twice*, the first time disastrously, the second time as now-Admiral Janeway used Klingon temporal technology to help her still-Delta quadrant-bound counterpart avoid the pitfalls she couldn't originally foresee. This bookended the series. The crew, which had been stranded in the pilot, found their way home at the end.

Some of the actors, notably Kate Mulgrew and Robert Duncan McNeill, liked the finale. Others, including Robert Beltran and Garrett Wang, had more doubts. Most had some questions. Jeri Ryan said, "The finale felt rushed. I would have liked to have seen what happened [after the second return] and how the people reacted to [the returned crewmembers]. I felt like some of that might have been missing. But I thought it was great, full of action, and full of human storylines as well."

No less than Michael Piller, along with Berman and Jeri Taylor—one of VOYAGER's original creators, and executive producer its first year—had praise for the finale. He explained, "I liked it. I know some people had some problems with Janeway re-inventing history for her own personal satisfaction. But frankly, when I sit down and watch a television show, I have to watch it from an emotional standpoint, not an intellectual, TREK historian base. I watched the last two hours, and I was moved. I felt that there was character conflict and interesting surprises. It satisfied me on every level as a viewer." **CFQ**

three or four different shots with one setup on motion control... This would allow us to set up maybe four different shots of say, Zimmerman, then lock everything down. Bob Picardo changes, he comes back, and now we shoot the Doctor for all four shots. We would probably have a bluescreen hung behind him. When we had those done, we'd take down the bluescreen, put a wall back in for background, and we'd shoot again. It was very time consuming to do this, but not as time consuming as it would have been if we have had to go through four different changes"

"It's fair to say that I was never more frightened in my life." —Neelix

THE HAUNTING OF DECK TWELVE

★★★

5/17/2000. Production #245. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Mike Sussman and Kenneth Biller & Bryan Fuller. Story by Mike Sussman. Directed by David Livingston.

When all power on Voyager needs to be shut down temporarily, Neelix is asked to supervise the Borg children. When the children come out of their alcoves, they tell Neelix about having heard of a ghost on deck twelve, and demand to know more. Neelix tells them the story of Voyager entering a J class nebula, where it picks up an unwanted visitor: some kind of electromagnetic discharge that comes onto the ship and passes from system to system, disrupting functions and interfering with atmospheric controls.

Said Fuller, "We use Neelix telling the Borg children a story as a framing device, to tell a haunted house story. He actually has quite a bit to do in it. It's a Janeway-Neelix story. The stories are separate in a way; their arcs are separate, but it focuses more on Janeway and Neelix."

Added Biller, "The ghost story, 'The Haunting of Deck Twelve,' is really fun. There is a scary thing happening on the ship, and the Borg children wake up in the middle of it. Neelix has been sent to take care of them. In the darkened cargo bay, with nothing but a plasma lantern to light their faces, he begins to tell them the story about a mysterious creature that came aboard the ship."

"Perhaps you'll be getting home sooner than you expected... We could help you... You'd find that we can be quite accommodating. But we'd expect the same in return."

—The Borg Queen (Susanna Thompson)

UNIMATRIX ZERO

★★★

5/25/2000. Production #246. Stardate unknown. Teleplay by Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky. Story by Mike Sussman. Directed by Allan Kroeker.

When Seven regenerates, she finds herself in Unimatrix Zero, a realm of Borg cyberspace that can only be accessed by one in a million drones possessing a recessive gene that allows independent thought. She is approached in this world by Axum (Mark Deakins), who pleads with her to help him release a nanovirus that will shield the realm's location from the Borg Queen.

Mark Deakins played Tournel in STAR TREK: INSURRECTION, as well as a Hirogen in "The Killing Game."

The two-part "Unimatrix Zero," which would be concluded at the beginning of season seven, completes what Braga and Menosky considered a Borg trilogy, beginning with the two-part "Scorpion," and followed later by the two-hour "Dark Frontier." Story credit went to Mike Sussman, who became a staff writer season seven.

Said Braga, "The story proceeds on three fronts. There is the Borg Queen, trying to find the place, doing all sorts of very wicked things to drones to get to it. There is Janeway, as kind of a John Brown figure. She sees this Unimatrix Zero as a place that, if they play some cards right, could actually be the undoing of the Borg once and for all. Another part of this story is that Seven learns that she was one of these people. She has the mutation; she had a very serious love affair with a man there. It will be Seven's first romance and her first kiss." **CFQ**

John Carpenter's

GHOSTS

of mars



The Maverick Director Makes His Latest Movie, and Doesn't Spare CFQ His Opinion of Our Work

By Denise Dumars

It was going so well. We'd managed to swing some time with John Carpenter, indie maverick and director of *JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS*, the new SF action-adventure film that was scheduled by Screen Gems for release at the end of August. Living up to his rep as an avid film fan and engaging interview, the director had been generous in describing the difficulties encountered on location, and in going over the inspirations that had led him to creating this off-world reenvisioning of his legendary *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*.

Then we mentioned that we were writing for *Cinefantastique*, and the other part of the Carpenter legend—the maverick who believed in speaking his mind and letting

the chips fall where they may—came to the fore.

Why should our readers see this film? “I have no idea,” he said. “Probably your readers shouldn’t go. In fact, I think it’s smart not to go. And probably smart to go to see something else instead! Truly, stay home and watch *BUFFY*, man.

“Don’t go to see my films. People watch my movies and at the end they come out and say, ‘My God, they’re letting that guy direct? If he can direct movies, then I can become president.’ That’s what they think. The head of my fan club lives under the Hollywood freeway in a cardboard box. You DO NOT want to see my movie!”

Probably not the kind of endorsement that Screen Gems was hoping for. And certainly not the kind of response we were expecting, especially having been welcomed

so warmly on-location during the complex shoot.

The set was in what looked like an abandoned power plant—until you got close enough to hear the hum of the great transformers and learn that cell phones and other electronic gadgets were unworkable in its midst. This was the old Edison plant in Eagle Rock, CA, set up against the mountains between Pasadena and Glendale, in an area remote enough to almost make one imagine that this was, indeed, Mars.

JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS takes place on an Earth colony in 2176 CE. Most of the colonists are miners, exploiting the planet for its natural resources. For the purposes of filming, the WPA-era Edison plant had been transformed into a Martian jail, with every cell



—as is everything on John Carpenter's Mars—tinged with the familiar, pinkish rust-red we have come to associate with our most Earth-like neighbor.

Many of the cast members on the set were down with colds that day; Natasha Henstridge was so ill she spent her time between takes in her trailer, napping. And here we were, looking forward to interviewing the cast members still standing. Interestingly, Mars has turned out to be something of a matriarchy: the police force, helmed by Commander Helena Braddock (Pam Grier), and backed by Lt. Melanie Ballard (Natasha Henstridge) and Bashira Kincaid (Clea Duvall) has women in its highest positions; and Professor Whitlock, the archaeologist who discovers the title characters, is played by Joanna Cassidy.

Rounding out the cast are Jason Statham, currently starring in Guy Richie's *SNATCH*, as the fourth member of Ballard's team, and Ice Cube, as "Desolation" Williams, the most notorious criminal on Mars. The red dirt hits the fan when Ballard and her officers are bringing in Williams just as the full force of unearthed Martian ghost warriors is unleashed on the unwary colonists.

"Once they are unleashed, they take over the bodies of the miners on Mars. You're dead once they take you over; they use you, and then go on to someone else when they have no use for you. When a Martian warrior takes you over, they file their teeth to points, they pierce and mutilate themselves," said publicist Michael Battaglia, setting the scene for me.

Sandy King, the film's producer, stepped in to discuss the unique nature of the Martian warriors. "I think that there's a line in the movie that explains it. It's an interesting notion that there are things right here on Earth, all the way from microorganisms to small amphibious animals, that don't die

when they dry up. They revive when it rains. I think that the *GHOSTS OF MARS* are like that. They are ancient warriors who have been entombed. For all intents and purposes they are gone, but there's a certain hostility that remains in them that ties in with our notion of the red planet, named for the god of war. The spirit that survives on Mars doesn't want any intruders."

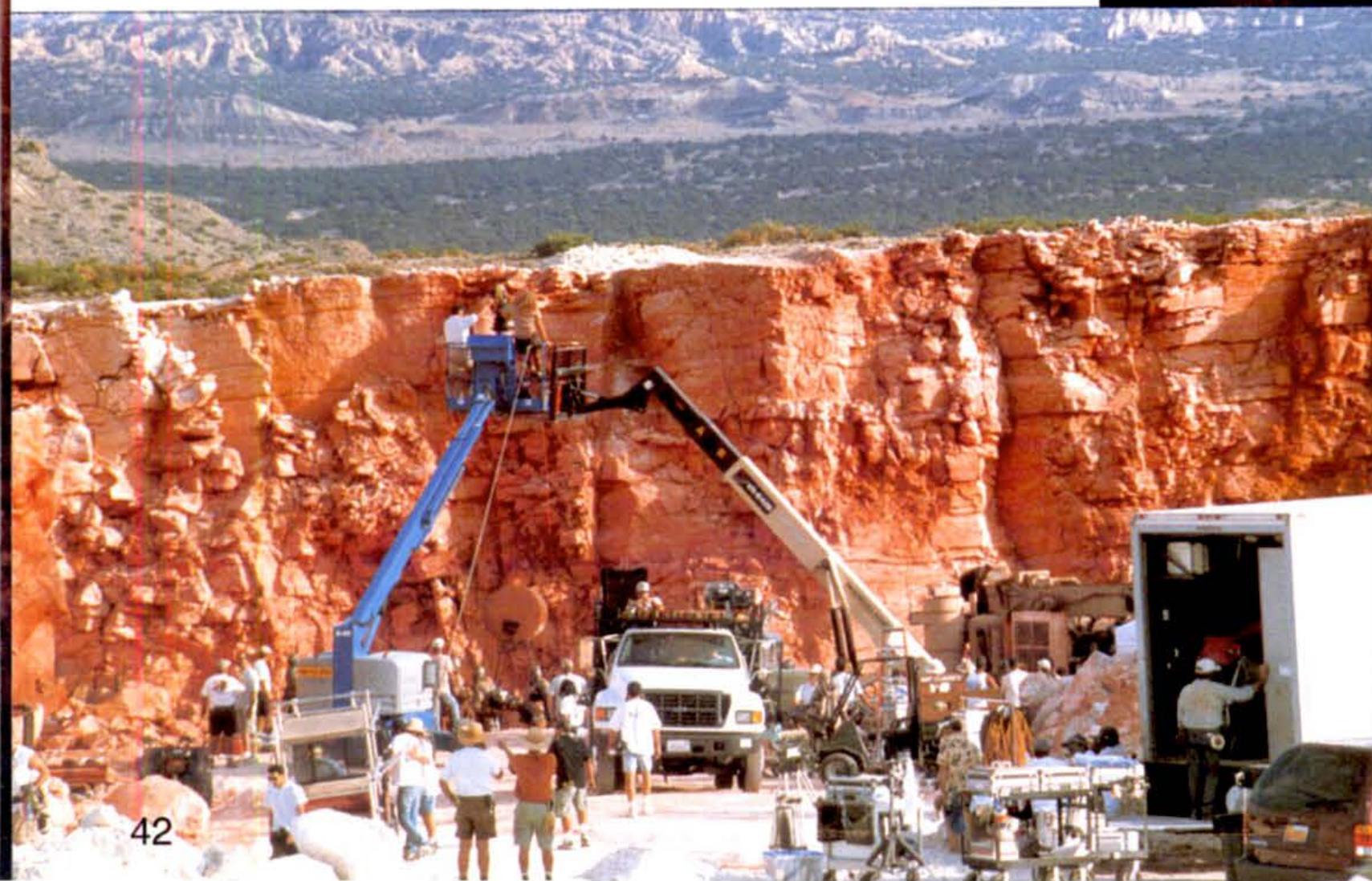
People make jokes about it, but it seems that everything we send to Mars either disappears or malfunctions, making it appear that Mars doesn't want us there. "I think it's totally about our attitude toward the red planet," King said of the film. "Mars has been a fascination from the beginning of recorded history. Its color, its remoteness, and its almost-accessibility makes it great fodder for exploration and our imaginations."

"The logical thought is that in the future, corporations are the funders of space exploration. Mining would take place to build the infrastructure, and it would make sense that mining companies would be interested. Of course, there are supposed to be science officers monitoring everything that goes on, and that's where Whitlock's character comes into play, preserving anything unusu-

al they find, such as signs of life, artifacts, or something that shouldn't be touched."

"I think that really what the story, like most of John's movies, deals with is the nature of our own humanity, the nature of our own destiny and, in a kind of controversial way, our own dominion. The people on Mars have to settle those differences for purposes of survival. And I think that appears as a recurring theme in John's movies."

OFF-WORLD WAR ZONE: With a little bit of red dye, a gypsum mine in New Mexico (bottom) became the perfect stand-in for a Martian colony. Right: Ice Cube plays a criminal falsely accused of murder.



"*GHOSTS OF MARS* is much like *THE THING*, which was an ensemble movie with many memorable characters. Collectively, I think we have a cast that represents our future. It's more diverse, things are more equal, for women, for the races, for everybody. There's a monument in the film to the first woman on Mars. No one's going to be on Mars who is a lightweight; this is like a frontier. We started out thinking that we're gonna do *GUNSMOKE* on Mars and

continued on page 45

John Carpenter

Mars is the Place, but Not the Point, as the Genre Master Takes Horror and Action Off-World

By Denise Dumas

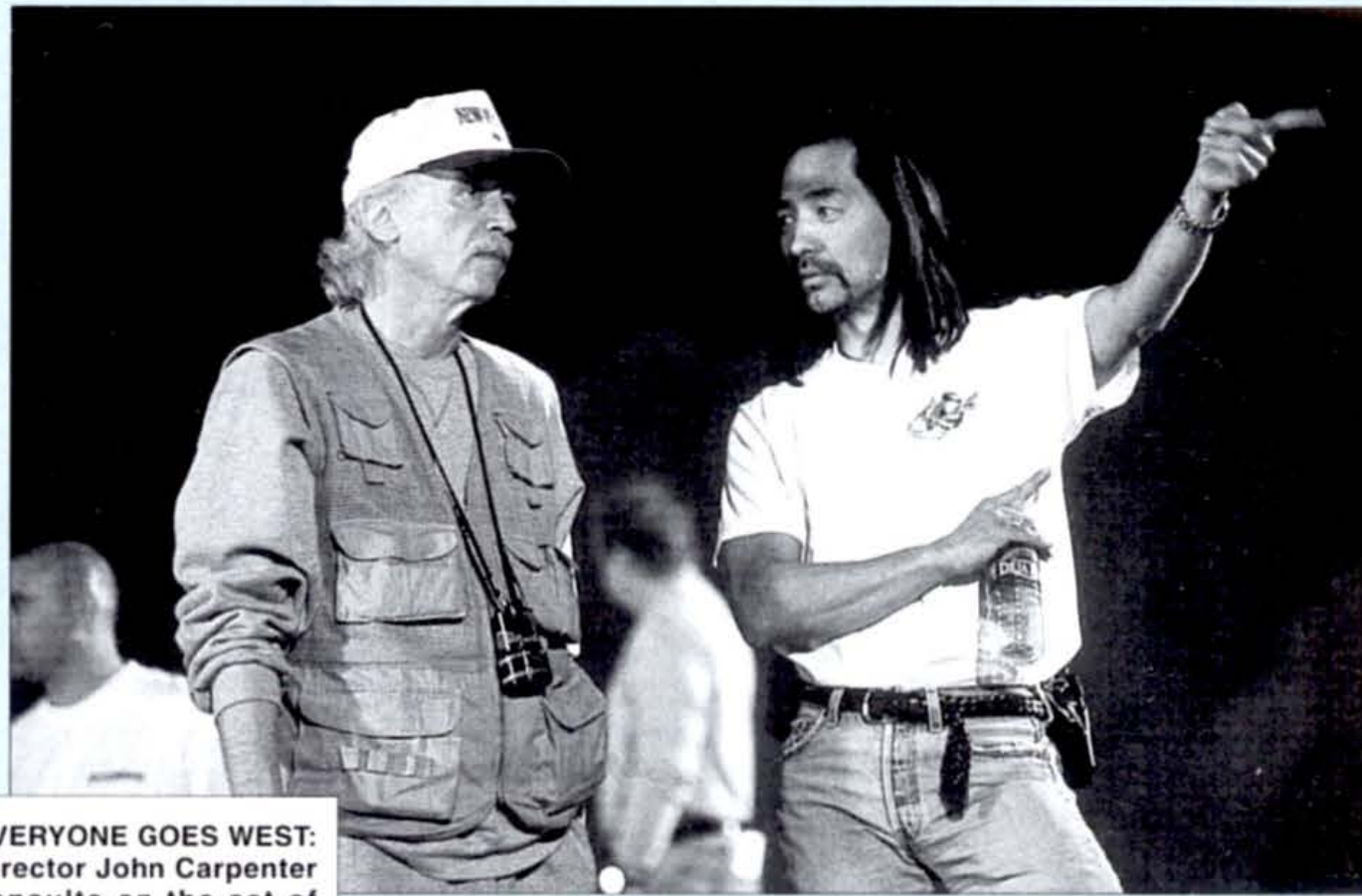
It's no surprise that John Carpenter, a big Sergio Leone fan, would call his new film *GHOSTS OF MARS* a "Western on Mars." In the film, Mars is the new frontier, barely terraformed, with a hardscrabble existence being eked out by miners who are kept in line by a police force comprised primarily of smart, tough women.

The public loves Mars movies, yet *GHOSTS OF MARS* has been preceded by two poorly-received films set on the red planet. We had to ask Carpenter, "Why Mars?"

"I've been tinkering with the idea of a Mars movie since the '80's," he said. "Mars has always been this really powerful influence on human affairs. It symbolizes so many things to us: lust, blood, the god of war, and romance—very emotional stuff. But I didn't want to make a 'space suit' movie. So I thought about a western-Mars

as the new frontier. It's in the future and we've colonized Mars, and it's about eighty-four percent terraformed. So what you have is a somewhat breathable atmosphere. I then thought that we can use Mars as a setting, but it's not an essential. Because I wanted to frame a certain kind of story."

The film is still science fiction—there are Martians in it—but their provenance isn't really the point. "I would call it a dominion film," the director said, "meaning that [you could] imagine that, long before we ever walked the earth, perhaps there was a race of creatures on Mars and an atmos-



EVERYONE GOES WEST: Director John Carpenter consults on the set of *GHOSTS OF MARS*. Bringing Howard Hawks to the Red Planet.

phere of some sort, before it was a dying planet, a dead planet.

Well, let's imagine that they never developed high technology; they were

much more like the kind of early cultures we had here. But they did develop magic, the supernatural. So as they died out they left

behind a curse, so that if anyone dared lay claim to their planet, they would be in trouble. That was the supernatural/horror genesis of the project."

Mars haunted by ghosts? The man may have a point. Certainly it seems as though our unmanned trips to the planet have been cursed with unending bad luck. Carpenter

laughed. "We don't believe in Martians any more, really. Some of us believe that there are UFOs circling the earth, that all that stuff is real. You know the clichés. A lot of people are very vehement in their beliefs—alien abductions and that stuff. A lot of that is very strong belief. Well, if they exist, where are they then?"

Jason Statham is one of the standout actors in the film, having recently turned in a stunning performance in Guy Ritchie's film *SNATCH*. "I saw him in *LOCK, STOCK, AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS*," said Carpenter. "And I just thought he had something—a really star presence. His character, for lack of a better description, is an old-fashioned hound dog, and this is a matriarchal society that he's in now. Women control everything on Mars because of overpopulation on Earth. There aren't a lot of heterosexuals left, and he's one of them. So he gets to play

FEMMES FATALE: Carpenter posits a matriarchal Mars where Pam Grier (second from right) is the baddest of the bad.



with this kind of rakish charm that he's really cool at."

And the strong women in the film? "Well, you know, they all get to kick my ass!"

Not that we got to see such unwarranted helmer-abuse during our visit to the GHOSTS OF MARS location at Eagle Rock, CA. In fact, we'd been told that one of those smart, tough, women, Natasha Henstridge, had been laid low by a bad cold.

ately a bond, because Sam is perhaps the biggest Beach Boys fan on the earth. He loves them as I do."

We asked about Carpenter's penchant for casting musicians in his films, in this case Ice Cube's role as a bad-guy who must, in the end, join forces with the police to fight the Martians. "The studio said, how about Ice Cube for the part of Desolation Williams? We hit it

Carpenter immediately began stammering. "I have no idea what you're talking about!"

"My biggest thing in this film is the exploration of the characters. The relationship between Ice Cube's and Natasha's characters, the cop and the crook and so forth... I don't know, it's kind of a chance to make a cool action movie. You'll come out of the film saying, 'Okay, it's not brain surgery, but it's kind of cool.'"

Part of that coolness may well stem from the fact that, though it's on Mars, GHOSTS is rather retro in its technology. "It's just fun," Carpenter said. "You have to imagine that on Mars, to survive the winds, the climate there, well, there aren't too many computers there. You need industrial-strength stuff."

The ghosts of the title come to life and possess individuals. You can kill the possessed body, but then the ghost just possesses someone else, making these warriors very hard to kill. "It sure does, doesn't it?" Carpenter said. "The ghost comes back out and comes after you! Guess you gotta keep runnin'."

"It's kind of a great design. I mean, if you have something that drifts along on the wind, co-opts any humans it finds and turns them into Martian warriors, and then turns them into virtual machines that come after you, well then, they're gonna win. I thought about what kind of trap could be left by these Martians that would be fool-proof. This seemed like a good one."

The walls of the jail had been constructed inside a power plant soundstage, but that was nothing compared to the outdoor set. "We needed something with enormous space. At the time there was no [studio] space [large enough to simulate the Mars surface], so our other

choice was to go some place on Earth and make it look like somewhere else. We had to find someplace that had some access for the crew.

"The Pueblo Indians in Albuquerque owned this gypsum mine, up on a mountain. Gypsum is white; it's used in wall-board. We built a set there and, using biodegradable dye, made the whole thing red. We dyed 55 acres. The first night of shooting, the leaders of the Pueblo Indians came up and their religious figure blessed the set. We needed all the help we could get: It was the monsoon season. It rained every day. We had to redo the red dye every day.

"It's one of these pictures that you get involved with the story and the characters. Natasha and Ice Cube and their relationship are the main story. They're the main characters.

Again sticking with tradition, Carpenter did the music for GHOSTS. "With the help of Anthrax," he admitted, "and various people. One of the musicians on the soundtrack is Buckethead. He played with Guns 'n' Roses, and he plays with a Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket on his head. He did that on the set," he laughed.

"I think it's going to be a fun film. I'm very happy with this film; I think it's pretty cool. It wasn't an easy movie to make. These pictures get harder the older you get; physically they get harder. I found that, this time, balancing the narrative demands with the modern speed that films have to go at was an interesting task. We had to really work to get the balance between not rushing the film through but then not wasting our time."

Having to work under such pressure, it's perhaps understandable why, when asked about his future plans, Carpenter admitted to having other things besides bloodthirsty Martians and desperate colonists on his mind. "We've just finished the sound mix. I am looking forward to the basketball playoffs. Then I'll watch the WNBA, then I'll have to go into therapy for my addiction to basketball, then it'll be November when basketball starts up all over again."

CFC



OKAY, SO NOW DEAN MARTIN IS GOING TO SING, AFTER WHICH DUKE WAYNE WILL GET HIM TO SWEAR OFF BOOZE AND... UH... OH... SORRY: Carpenter sets up scene with anti-hero Ice Cube.

"We had to shut down for three or four weeks after that," Carpenter admitted. "She was very ill. It wasn't just a cold. She had to stay home."

We mentioned Sandy King, Carpenter's wife and the film's producer. "She's an old-time pro," said the director. She was a script supervisor when I met her, and she's been in the business since the '70's. She knows how movies are made, and so we worked together, and she evolved into the producing role, which is extremely complicated, and very difficult. She's very, very competent at it."

We noted that Sam Neill, starring in the newly-released JURASSIC PARK III, is a fan of Carpenter's. "I'm a fan of his!" the director replied. "We had a blast working together. I love him as an actor, and as a person too. He starred in IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS, and I met him when we worked on the Chevy Chase film MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN. We discovered immedi-

off immediately. In the beginning of the film it appears that he has committed some atrocities. But we find out he didn't; in fact our villainous ghosts have."

A Martian landscape had to be created in New Mexico for the film, which as a whole will employ a variety of special effects and makeup techniques. "Of course I should disclaim that this is an 'effects film,'" Carpenter said. "The effects are just there to give you a sense of setting. The effects are subordinate to the story. To see a cool effects movie, go see THE MUMMY RETURNS. My film's not like that at all."

So, okay, what's it like? "It's like this western on Mars!" he laughed. "RIO BRAVO on Mars. They're holed up in the jail."

Gee, sounds like another Carpenter film we saw once... that one where people are holed up in a jail... ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13, yeah, that's it.

now it's more like **THE LONGEST DAY** on Mars—it's a war movie."

Already, Mars has a crime problem. "Human nature," King admitted. "It goes with you wherever you go. Much like moving west across the prairies, you have a fundamental law enforcement force. But there's rough trade on Mars: highly individualistic people who go there, sort of like the types that went to Dodge City. There are no glass windows; things are rocky; the surface is pitted; fancy, high-tech stuff doesn't work."

"Williams is supposed to be a serial killer, but we find out that's not true. There's that assumption of guilt; then there's trust and innocence. That's the character side of it. Then we blow a lot of stuff up."

"This is not going to be a kid movie. It's a rough movie. The morality of Mars is rougher and looser; this is not something that younger kids should understand. It's an adult-action, SF, war movie. It's unapologetic horror. It's not sensationalistic or over-the-top, but frankly the notion of being possessed by ghosts is pretty scary. And then you have a war. It's like the Alamo. A small band of people surrounded by a huge number of men possessed by warrior spirits."

The actual Martians are only seen in dreams, in visions of the past. "The actual Martian civilization is gone," said King. "Ancient tombs are uncovered and a kind of wind comes out. It's an accidental unearthing. It becomes a place where people from a lot of different backgrounds come together and have to fight for their survival and also for human dominion."

Two Mars movies have already come out. How will this Mars movie differ? "Well," said King, "That's like asking, how is **FRIED GREEN TOMATOES** different from other chick movies? We're not a hardware or an outer space movie. I think Mars takes a fantasist's imagination, and I think each film takes a completely different direction. I think you'll find hints of the third Quatermass film, hints of **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES**, hints of **THE ANGRY RED PLANET**."

She laughed. "It's in a fine old tradition. But I haven't seen one that combined outer space and war, except for **STARSHIP TROOPERS**, which did so in a much different way. This is not a techno-war; it's a hand-to-hand war. I can only hope that we're a great throwback to **IT**, **THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE**: making space scary again. That frontier has to have some fear in it.

"Natasha Henstridge as Melanie and Ice Cube as Desolation Williams are the two leads. They have to unite the people to fight the warriors, and they're like oil and water. Then there's the character we call 'Big Daddy Mars' on the set. He's the leader of the warriors."

"And on one level it's a chick-action movie: We have Joanna Cassidy, who is a great veteran of action roles. Clea DuVal and Natasha coming up the ranks are very adept actresses; you believe them as action

When we admitted our admiration for her work in **BLADERUNNER** and our avid affection for movies where the gals get to beat up on the guys, Cassidy laughed. "Well, thank you very much!" she said. "We get to do some of that in this movie, too."

Cassidy explained the background of her character: "She's basically a scientist—an archeologist, but also a bit of a geologist, all that. She has to have a knowledge of the planet and its workings, so that when they



A NEW BRAND OF TOUGH: Hardened colonists find themselves fighting for survival when an accident awakens the GHOSTS OF MARS.

heroines. And we have some guys who

are also very adept, such as Ice Cube who's done **THREE KINGS** and Jason Statham from **LOCK, STOCK, AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS**. The actors and actresses all had to go through training to prepare for the film. The stunt coordinator designed action for women that was believable. There's a desperation to the fights; they aren't slick. Our stunt coordinator has done all our films and he designs fights to reveal character."

Joanna Cassidy, who plays Prof. Whitlock, the archeologist who unwittingly unleashes the title characters, was in her trailer with her three dogs and a beautiful blue macaw. A big, fuzzy black dog named Max had other ideas about our taking notes: Every attempt at writing was foiled by a nudge from omnipresent pooch, demanding to be petted.

With her pets in tow, Cassidy appeared much the same as she did as the snake-charming replicant in **BLADERUNNER**—but with a much grittier look. Her earth-toned costumes reflected the red Martian dust that gets into everything.

find things she can understand what's going on and get things done.

"I think Whitlock is a bit of a loner. She's tough, she's purposeful, she's come to a point in her life where she has decided it's okay to be away from everybody and everything. She really has resigned herself to this sort of outpost of nomads in the middle of nowhere. Not the usual thing for a scientist who's used to having a lab, a staff, [a place] where everything is very sterile. This is far from sterile. This is down-and-dirty."

Whitlock is the one who unearths the mysterious beings who wreak havoc with the colonists. "Before that, nobody knew anything about a previous civilization on Mars. She discovers them about a quarter of the way into the film. Once the Martians are discovered, the whole movie takes off. There's no time for backstory for my character. There are so many things going on in this movie that it's very hard to give any one character a background."

Explaining the rationale behind the Martian warriors, Cassidy said, "It's like animals that hibernate or lie dormant on Earth

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KNB Effects

Job One: Come Up with Resurrected Warriors Bizarre Enough to Spook Even Off-World Miners

By Denise Dumars

We're having a light Martian day today," said celebrated special effects makeup artist Greg Nicotero on the Eagle Rock, CA set of JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS. "We only have one Martian warrior on the set. When we were in Albuquerque, we had 130 warriors."

The lone warrior was Benchley, a guy whose fingertips—as the result of a Martian possession that compels its victims to disfigure themselves in grotesque and frightening ways—had been cut away, revealing the ends of bones. "The idea," Nicotero explained, "is that he's a guy locked up in a cell in the jail here, so what we came up with is that he doesn't have access to anything but his fingernails. Once he scratches himself, he actually chews off the tips of his fingers and sharpens the bones into claws, and then he uses the claws to disfigure himself. It's all about trying to make themselves as menacing and frightening as possible."

Nicotero's work was impressive: "Benchley" appeared to have pieces of his scalp and face deeply scored, and strips of flesh pulled back and pinned. The hands were particularly gruesome—if they were this convincing up close, they would certainly be terrifying on-screen. Once more, Nicotero had outdone himself (so much so that the prosthetic makeup worn by the actor limning Benchley immobilized the guy to the point where he had to be

fed his poached halibut dinner by a cooperative assistant).

Nicotero has been pulling down some heavy gigs of late. His work was seen recently in LITTLE NICKY and UNBREAKABLE. After GHOSTS OF MARS wrapped, he went to work on EVOLUTION, the Ivan Reitman/David Duchovny film. Taking time from his on-set duties, the makeup master explained the origin of his work on GHOSTS. "John Carpenter and Sandy King called me up

search revolves around fantasy illustrators, and we've worked with a lot of guys like Bernie Wrightson and people like that. It brings a new level to the design, because you're having real artists design things.

"A lot of the warrior look—which includes tribal tattooing and pieces of skin that are peeled back and pinned with metal—is very ROAD WARRIOR-esque, but it was a lot gorier and more graphic."

Gorier, more graphic, and,

Nicotero, was grueling: "We'd get there at 4 PM, and we wouldn't start shooting until 9 PM, so we would work five hours and do a massive assembly line of prosthetics. Then they would shoot all night, and they'd wrap and we'd have to clean everybody up. So we were working from four in the afternoon until eight or nine the next morning."

"Because I've been so close to the movie when we were in Albuquerque, it was like guerilla warfare. We were in the middle of the desert, freezing wind coming in, rain, and it was really hard. Now that we're here it's a lot more controllable and more enjoyable. I don't have to worry about doing makeup on 120 people a night."

Nicotero had nine people on his crew in Albuquerque. "They had about an hour per person. We had two guys who handled all the background masks. We had an assembly line. Then they'd come to me and I'd take a piece of metal, dip it in fake blood, pin it to their faces and say, 'You're done now.'"

"I kept saying to John, 'I'm too old for this,'" Nicotero laughed. "I'm too old for this eighteen-hour-day stuff. With the advent of computer effects, we constantly have to prove ourselves. Now people like us have to work harder. I still believe that a good prosthetic head looks better than a CGI head any day. Unless you have ILM and millions of dollars and you're Spielberg, I think CGI always looks fake."

Nicotero said we wouldn't



BATTLEFIELD EXULTATION: The makeup effects experts at KNB had their hands full keeping GHOSTS OF MARS' gore factor suitably over the top.

about a year ago," he said. "They said, 'We have this movie, GHOSTS OF MARS, and I think it's right up your alley.' I read the script and did a couple of prototype designs. John flipped out over them. They ended up taking a lot of those designs to meetings with them to sort of help explain the visual idea of what we were going for."

"Those designs were pretty much what we stuck with."

Nicotero's original concepts took off from the work of fantasy illustrator Brom. "We actually hired him to design a lot of these characters. A lot of our re-

for the siege sequences shot in New Mexico, required on a mass-production scale. "The first challenge," said Nicotero, "was how do we do group scenes of, say, 120 people? We had 75 background masks that were foam-latex masks that ended at the jaw-line, so we didn't have to worry about necks flapping. They were used to convey mass numbers. Then we had 25 close-up characters, and those were actual prosthetics that we did each night. It was a tremendous undertaking for us."

The process, according to

be seeing any characters die on the set today. "We have one possessed character today. We chopped somebody's thumb off last night and John loved it! He shot five different angles of it. The character was holding a can and making a homemade bomb, and boom, he holds the can up and his thumb's missing."

Nicotero explained the effect: "We made a hole in the can, stuck his thumb in the can, and made a fake thumb with a blood tube in it. That's as simple as it gets. John liked to see the spurt-ing blood. He shot it several ways. I can always tell when he likes something, because he shoots it in several ways."

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, more work was being done on the effects. "Back at KNB, they were still making pieces for the character Big Daddy Mars, and for some of the heroes, on top of the fact that not only did we build the prosthetics but we also built eighty of the costumes because they were specialty items and we have a division of KNB that builds costumes."

Big Daddy Mars—so named by the KNB crew for his prominent role in *GHOSTS*' storyline—was by no means your run-of-the-mill modern-primitive warrior. "In the film he's called the biggest, baddest Martian you've ever seen," said Nicotero. "He's sort of the ringleader of the warriors. He has a very different look from the others. The challenge was taking these people and not altering them tremendously—because they're still human beings—but making them look as though they've mutilated themselves."

As one might expect, the body-count in *GHOSTS* is not inconsiderable. "We took a different approach to a lot of the deaths," said Nicotero. "This is like it's happening in real time—no slow motion shots of

somebody succumbing. It's like, one minute a person's running next to you, and the next...blam! Their head's gone.

Which of course



MUTILATION WAY: Greg Nicotero took inspiration for his Martian warriors from the grotesque works of fantasy illustrator Brom.

meant going to the computer for a digital assist. "We used a similar approach to what they did in *SLEEPY HOLLOW*," Nicotero said, "which was a combination of CGI and prosthetic heads. There's a little bit of a crossover with us, in terms of digitally-removing actors' heads and then shooting plates of heads spinning off. There's a lot of visual effects in just shooting the Martian colony, which I tend to forget about because I don't have much to do with it."

Natasha Henstridge's character, at one point, is possessed by one of the ghosts. "While she's possessed, she has a vision of Mars in the past," Nicotero said. "So we'll see



what the Martians looked like, too. That'll be fun for us, because we're designing a really neat puppet that definitely looks different and will also help tie things together. When you see this flashback, you'll understand more about the warriors."

Nicotero is a long-time Carpenter collaborator. "We've been working with John for almost ten years," he said. "It's still fun. I mean, he directed *THE THING*, the greatest horror movie of the '80s!

"We wanted to make this look different. We wanted these characters to be interesting and memorable. Some people call this movie a remake of *ASSAULT ON*

PRECINCT 13 done on Mars, which is a pretty good tag line. The difference is that a lot of the characters in that film were faceless gangsters and thugs, but in this film, we see the antagonists up close, and Big Daddy Mars is much more of a threatening force, because he interacts very closely with these people."

Nicotero made it clear that one can't just pick up a gun and blow away a Martian warrior. "Assume that someone's coming at you, possessed by a ghost, and you shoot them. The body of the possessed person dies, but all the ghost does is look for another host body. Ear-

lier in the film somebody shoots someone who's possessed and the ghost possesses Benchley, here, and nobody knows it. Suddenly he's in his jail cell and starts mutilating himself."

Is there a little taste of *THE THING* and its ability to shapeshift in this idea? "Yeah, except *THE THING* is a lot more about who's infected and who isn't. In this film, you'll know it. It's more like, if someone gets possessed, you cut your losses and get out before you become one of them."

"We still want to create cool effects and have people sit in the theater and say, how did they do that? John is the hardest to fool. He'll say, 'Okay, now how were we going to do this again?' And I'd say, 'Okay, we have a rubber arm, there's a squib in the arm and we detonate the squib. The arm comes apart and digitally we'll add this weapon and it'll look like the weapon cuts in half.' And he'll say, 'Okay, bring in the cheesy rubber arm.'" Nicotero laughed. "He's seen it all. It's lost some of its allure!"

Nicotero worked with costume designer Robin Bush on building and designing *GHOSTS*' costumes. "There were a lot of foam latex pieces involved, so we just took the ideas and ran with them. We built, I think, 60 costumes. For example, we made some prosthetic chests that women wore, that have fake breasts that we pierced. The women who are taken over by warriors are wearing necklaces with fingers on them, and that kind of stuff. There's even one character directly out of a Brom drawing: a woman in a bustier that is held up by two severed hands. It's completely outrageous." **CFQ**

until the rainy season and then come out. No one knew they were here until my character uncovers them. No one but John Carpenter, that is."

How does Whitlock react once things get scary? "This is Mars! A woman on Mars has to be quick-witted and able to take any guy down who causes trouble. She's very weapon-savvy."

"I work out all the time. I've done action roles pretty much ever since *BLADERUNNER*. It keeps me young."

The film's "villain," if there is one besides the Martian warriors, of course, is "Desolation" Williams, Mars' most notorious criminal, as played by rapper and actor Ice Cube. "He's a guy who was actually born on Mars," said Cube. "He's a little bitter that he's never been to Earth. He's a terror on Mars—that's his reputation. But when you're in an alley fight, this is the kind of guy you want with you. And there is definitely an alley fight in this film."

The cops have taken Williams in, believing him a bloodthirsty serial killer. "He's been accused of the crimes that the ghosts are doing," said Cube. "They lock him up, and the way Melanie gets there is that her team is there to take me from one jail to another. When they get to the town, they realize something is wrong."

Do the cops then realize that he is then innocent of the crimes? "Yes, definitely. They begin to piece things together and figure out that I may be innocent of everything. When they *really* figure it out, they find they need my help to get out of the situation they're in."

Ice Cube likes working in genre film. "This is fun. I'm a big fan of John Carpenter. Getting to work with him, to do some SF and horror is definitely a step up for my career. I've always tried to do different things; *ANACONDA* and *THREE KINGS* were different for me. To get a movie like that under my belt, I'm really proud."

Noting that *GHOSTS* features an ensemble cast, Ice Cube laughed and said, "I'm the most important character in the movie, in a way. Most of the story revolves around Melanie, and then she partners up with me, and I don't want to give anything away. But we last a long time fighting the Martians together."

"It was fun working out on the desert. When you get into movies and doing this, you start to understand how special this industry is when you can go into the middle of New Mexico and there's a quarter of a mile of red—everything you can see; Mars right there on Earth. Just to see that kind of movie magic is fun, and then you get to play with all kinds of toys. I'm having a ball."

We asked Cube the question we've been posing to everyone on

the set: Is this an SF, horror, or action film? "The background is SF, just because it's on Mars. But that's more or less the backdrop. Most of this movie is horror and action. What's at stake is what makes it scary. You've got hundreds of crazed Martians ready to kill you. That does make it horror! And the action is cool. It's pretty primitive fighting going on."

"This film wasn't as hard to work on as some. We shot *ANACONDA* in Manaus, Brazil. That was tough. *THREE KINGS* was tough. I always seem to get crazy movies in crazy locations. But I would hate to do boring movies! I have faith in John Carpenter, one-hundred percent. By the time we're done, I'll say to him, 'The next time you do one of these, think about calling me.'"

Clea DuVal, who costarred in *GIRL, INTERRUPTED*, plays Bashira, part of the team assigned to bring in Desolation Williams. "She's a rookie cop," the actress said. "This is her first assignment. She's from Earth, and this is something she's always wanted to do. Pam Grier is my commander, and Natasha is the lieutenant. I work for her."

What does Bashira encounter as a rookie that she's not prepared for? "Everything!" DuVal laughed. "Everything that happens to us. All the decapitated bodies, the warriors; it seems like everything that can go wrong, does. None of what Bashira has learned at the academy works in this situation. I think at first she's not up to the challenge. She reacts to things in a less jaded way than anyone else." The others are used to this wild frontier, and Bashira is, despite the ubiquitous Martian dust, more green than red.

"We did a lot of action scenes, a lot of fights, up in New Mexico," said DuVal. "I

went through two months of training, every day, both working out and doing stunt training. It was very physically demanding. It was learning the fights, and then going to the shooting range and learning the guns." As others had mentioned, this Mars is not a high-tech place. "They're just handguns and shotguns," DuVal explained of the police force's weapons.

"Tonight, it's a scene where we have gone out to the train to get out of there, and the train's not there. We have to go back to the jail which is the set we're on right now and where we have to come up with a new plan. When we get there, there's no one around. Jason Statham's character goes out—he's the first one of us to see the Martian warriors. They figure out that we're there and then we're in trouble."

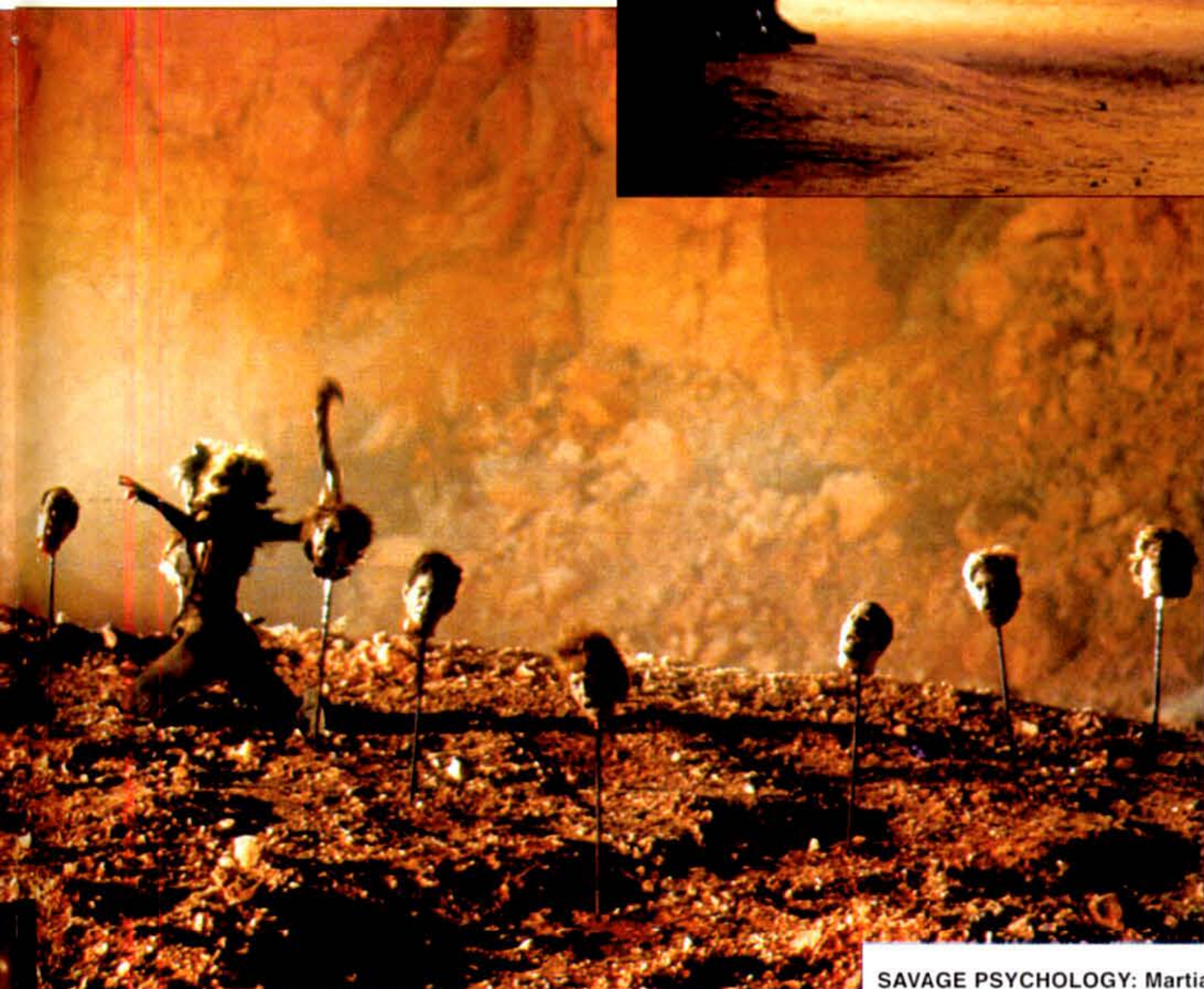
"My character is a different person by the end of the film. At first she's very by-the-book, and when all the stuff starts happening, it freaks her out. And then she learns to cope, and finds her strength."

Jason Statham, noted for his roles in *LOCK, STOCK, AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS* and *SNATCH*, portrays Jericho Butler, the lone male of the four cops sent to transfer Desolation Williams. "My manager set up a meeting for this film," said the actor, "and



I went to see John Carpenter in Turin where he was being honored at a film festival. I was right in the middle of shooting *SNATCH*, so I kept trying to meet up with John so he could tell me about his movie, and he met me and gave me the part! So that was cool."

Carpenter may have had a strong motivation to cast Statham—Jericho Butler sounds like your standard-issue, Guy Richie character transplanted to Mars: "I'm one of the cops—the police force is pretty much run by women," Statham explained. "And I'm this new



SAVAGE PSYCHOLOGY: Martian warriors deploy their own version of psychological warfare. Far left: Heavy atmosphere on the set. Top: John Carpenter directs Natasha Henstridge.

guy that sort of just shoots in—hence the British accent; not a native Martian. He's a specialist in breaking into things. He's got a way with locks and mechanical things, and he's got quite a way with fighting. I become one of the strong-arms that's sent to pick up Desolation Williams. I'm in it from the start of the fight with the Martians."

Unlike some of his costars, Statham enjoyed the fight scenes. "Oh yeah, I love it!" he said. "I've always enjoyed a bit of a rough and tumble, ever since I was a kid."

The desert shoot was a different environment for Statham. "It was dusty, windy at times, but I found it slightly more enjoyable than being stuck here. Out there, it was a massive area that you could sit around in if you weren't in a scene, watch the fight sequences. The set was awesome. We tended to sit outside and make fun of each other. It's a great crowd we've got in this film."

Statham laughed when we asked how his

character likes working for a matriarchy.

"He quite enjoys it. Of course he tries to bend the rules to suit his fancy, if you like. He's a cheeky chap who's trying to get in with his lieutenant, trying to seduce her if he can, trying to use all his charm. I used my experience of trying to impress girls when I was younger."

Once his character is embroiled in the fight with the Martian ghosts, though, it's a different story. "I have to fight twelve of these guys coming at me. You know, he's a very confident sort of man, and he's very capable. There's a line about how many people it takes to fry me. He doesn't get too scared. We'll see how he reacts!"

"It's almost like a penal colony in a little boom town," he said of the frontier-like setting. "There's nothing too high-tech. We've

got regular guns and stuff."

"Of course, I think John's probably had enough of me," he said when asked if he'd do another of these. "I've been very careful about what I've done so far, and have enjoyed every moment of every film I've done. I have nothing to moan about."

Of course, Statham could joke about Carpenter having his fill of the actor. Weeks later, we weren't so sure of the intended vibe as the director vouchsafed his feelings about *CFQ*. Despite our concerted efforts to convince him that our readers loved his work, the director remained skeptical.

"But they don't!" he insisted. "They never have! They put me down so many times throughout my career! I remember way back in 1978 when *HALLOWEEN* came out, this review came out that said, 'We've given this guy enough chances. He should go away!'"

[Editor's note: While it is true that in his review of HALLOWEEN in V.8 n. 2/3, David Schow criticized the film for having "a narrative riddled with cheap, reflexive shocks amid incoherent action," Mr. Carpenter forgets that a year later we devoted a cover issue (V. 10 n. 1) to his work in which we stated flat-out that, "Watching the artistic and critical progress of John Carpenter... has been a gratifying experience."]

Carpenter is convinced that the writers and readers of *Cinefantastique* are against him, and cited this author's favorite Carpenter film as an example: "I thought, 'My God, the whole thing about *THE THING*—the most hated genre film of all time.' I mean, I don't want an abusive relationship with anyone. So tell your readers to not go see this movie—under any circumstances!"

"I'm never gonna make another good movie," he insisted, and wouldn't be dissuaded.

Now it's our turn to be skeptical. *CFQ*

GHOSTS OF MARS

Carpenter's Westerns

Setting Battles on the Red Planet to the Mythology of Classic American Cinema

By John Thonen

The trailer for John Carpenter's latest film, *GHOSTS OF MARS*, describes the director as "the master of terror." While Carpenter has shown himself to be more than capable of working in a variety of genres (*STARMAN*, *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*, *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13*), it is inarguable that, within the world of cinematic horror, his name carries the greatest "brand name" cachet.

Carpenter's work generally eschews horror's time-honored traditions, but that doesn't mean that the director doesn't frequently utilize the components and framework of a traditional film genre. It's just that the genre is often not that of the horror film.

In 1998, Carpenter's wife and frequent producer, Sandy King, told CFQ, "I think that virtually all of John's movies are westerns. John grew up with

westerns. It was *the* film genre when we were kids. That's what John got into movies to make: westerns."

Carpenter himself shared the reasons why he so often utilizes the concepts and structures of the western movie: "We have very few forms that we've invented in this country. We have jazz, I suppose rock and roll, and we have the western. The western is one of our very few storytelling myths. It's unique to the United States, and I hate to see that lost. But it *has* been lost over the years because they're not very popular anymore."

In his book *Westerns: Aspects of a Movie Genre*, British film historian Phillip French opined that, "The western is a commercial formula with rules as fixed and immutable as the Kabuki theatre. The events depicted have little to do with the real nineteenth century American fron-

tier life, [those] rituals are enacted in a timeless world where it is always high noon in some dusty cow town west of St. Louis. There is no theme you cannot examine in terms of the western, no situation which cannot be transposed to the West."

It would seem Carpenter agrees, but has found his own way of espousing it. Instead of transposing themes or situations to the West, he transposes themes and situations of the western into other film types.

GHOSTS marks Carpenter's 20th feature film, and its movie western antecedents are fairly easy to spot: The film takes place in a remote and desolate area, far from the pockets of civilization that are gradually changing its wasteland setting. The story involves miners, a notorious—even legendary—out-

law, and, of course, the forces of the law. There are attacks by hordes of primitive, indigenous warriors, as well as fist-

fight, gunfight, a fight on top of a train, and even a siege on a jail. If it wasn't for a title which places the locale in space and the opposition in the supernatural, *GHOSTS* would sound more like a western than any film of the past decade.

The first of Carpenter's "hidden" west-

erns was his earliest notable credit, the 21-minute, 1970, USC short, *THE RESURRECTION OF BRONCO BILLY*, which later won an Academy Award. Carpenter didn't direct the film—which is a modern-day story of a young man's gradual immersion in a cowboy movie-inspired fantasy life—but he is credited with its story, editing, and music, more than enough creative input to mark the short as the first of many Carpenter films to be "about" westerns without actually "being" a western.

Once out of USC, Carpenter supported himself by selling a number of scripts. One of the earliest of these was *BLOOD RIVER*, which was acquired by the greatest of all western stars, John Wayne. Wayne's health was beginning to suffer by this point, and he was looking for a valedictory film to seal his cinematic legend. Carpenter's tale of an old mountain man who helps a young man avenge the killing of his parents seemed a good fit. Unfortunately, shortly after completing *THE SHOOTIST* (1976), the actor's health took a turn for the worse, but he remained interested in Carpenter's script. "He wanted me to rewrite a whole section and get them off the river and get them on horseback. I was planning on doing that but then the Duke left us and, in my mind, there was no way to make that movie without him." The film was produced as a lackluster TV movie in 1991, starring Rick Schroder and a seemingly oddly cast Wilford Brimley in what would have been Wayne's role.

According to British fan Marc Bright, Carpenter later

OH, THE WELLS FARGO SPACE-SHIP IS A-LANDIN' ON THE PAD...: The good/bad man (Ice Cube, bottom) and the appointed representative of the law (Clea Duvall, top) protecting the frontier town from siege could be a scene out of any western. In John Carpenter's universe, though, the frontier town just happens to be on Mars.



sold another western script entitled *EL DIABLO*, which was to star Kurt Russell. Carpenter explained that, "It just never came together in a way that made everybody happy." Like *BLOOD RIVER*, *EL DIABLO* later found a home on TV, this time on HBO in 1990, where it won a Cable Ace Award for best movie or miniseries.

Now batting zero for two as far as western projects went, Carpenter briefly flirted with a 1994, hybrid western written by his fellow USC classmate, Frank Darabont (*GREEN MILE*), along with Chuck Russell (*THE MASK*). "It was a stranger-in-town idea," said the director, "except that the stranger is an alien. It had a cattle drive with a flying saucer. A lot of great stuff, but we never went anywhere with it. I've still got the script somewhere. It was a lot of fun."

Many analyses of Carpenter's work note the influence of director Howard Hawks, a point the director himself hardly denies. Carpenter would eventually remake the Hawks-produced (and many would say directed) *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* (1951) and many critics see Carpenter's first professional feature film, *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13* (1976) as a remake of a Hawks' 1959 western, *RIO BRAVO*. While acknowledging Hawks as his chief influence, Carpenter cites other major influences, such as the nearly forgotten Anthony Mann, director of *WINCHESTER 73*, *THE TIN STAR*, and *THE MAN FROM LARAMIE*. "I don't know that anybody would still be familiar with his stuff," said Carpenter, "But, for the time, he did very hard-edged westerns, often with Jimmy Stewart. Stewart wasn't playing his *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*, 'aw-gee-shucks' character in those. He was a tough guy. A real bastard in some of them."

Carpenter's western influences go beyond the classic directors of the genre. Both *VAMPIRES* and *GHOSTS OF MARS* show strong influences from latter-day masters of the western, in particular Sergio Leone and Sam Peckinpah. Carpenter refers to Leone's *ONCE*

UPON A TIME IN THE WEST as "an extraordinary film," and credits Peckinpah as having "transformed the action film, and transformed the language of violence as much as anyone has." The director has particular praise for Peckinpah's most controversial film, *THE WILD BUNCH*. "It's not so shocking

compared to the modern stuff, but at the time, no one was ready for a western like that. The viciousness of the film turned everyone off so much that they missed the beauty of it all and the incredible characters. It's a tough movie."

Ever the iconoclast, Carpenter also doesn't hesitate to offer criticism of the western-movie hierarchy which many would view as cinematic blasphemy, saying that he is not a big fan of John Ford. "One day I'd like to kind of tear his myth down a little bit," he said, "because I don't think he was that great a director, though he certainly was very influential."

Carpenter's '70s era scripts for *BLOOD RIVER* and *EL DIABLO* reflected a post-modern exploration of the mythology of the western that was common at the time. But when Carpenter entered the world of film production at the tail end of the post-modern western trend, he was batting zero for three in his attempts to produce a traditional western. Now, at age 53, it seems increasingly unlikely that he will ever do so. In fact, in 1998, when asked if he would ever make a "real" western, he told CFQ that "I dunno. I mean, somebody's got to clean up all that horseshit."

Luckily, Carpenter didn't allow the fading popularity of the western, or his own olfactory reluctance to make one, to keep him from making some decidedly untraditional westerns;

CLASSIC CONFLICT: Reincarnated Martians substitute for rampaging natives in *JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS*.



films that weren't westerns at all, yet which allowed him to incorporate the themes and archetypes of the western movie. Whether directly or peripherally, westerns often deal with man facing an uncivilized wilderness that is at once beautiful, dangerous, and unknown. This element is readily apparent in *GHOST OF MARS* and *VAMPIRES*, both of which were shot in the American Southwest, but Carpenter has also utilized other "untamed areas" to achieve the same effect. The Arctic barrens of *THE THING*, the urban-renewal project isolation of *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13* and *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, the cosmic void of *DARK STAR*, and the near-apocalyptic wastelands of *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* and *ESCAPE FROM L.A.* fit the concept as well as any shot of Monument Valley. The concept can even be stretched so far as to include the subterranean world-within-a-world found in *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*.

Another common aspect of western movies can be found in their heroes, many of whom are frequently anti-heroes. Noting that Shane was hardly his type of western hero, Carpenter said, "If you look at a movie like *RED RIVER*, which is one of the last classic American westerns, Wayne plays Captain Ahab. He's a vicious bully. He's not a nice guy, not the traditional hero at all. He wasn't in *THE SEARCHERS* either. He was a bigot. It's those colors that I've always appreciated in westerns:

where things are not so clear-cut.

"Someone like Snake Plissken: he doesn't care about killing you and he doesn't care about saving you. He just wants to move through and survive."

THEY LIVE contains another frequent western movie trope that brought controversy to many writers and directors during the genre's heyday in the witch-hunt '50s: an almost anti-capitalist outlook that portrayed the railroads, land barons, and industrialists as bad guys, and farmers and ranchers as the good guys. Carpenter himself explained that, "The western is based on the American cliché... that here's a place where the individual is important. A man can walk out on his property and he's unencumbered by the government, and unencumbered by the rich...you know, there's the idea of individual freedom and duty: You have to bring this prisoner in, defend this town or fort, or whatever. That's all real basic American stuff."

In looking back over John Carpenter's films to date, it would seem that he most often uses a western motif to rewrite our present through the lens of the myths of our past, and to occasionally imagine a future governed by the same principles. For 20 years, John Carpenter has provided life-support for America's own genre. That his latest film, *GHOSTS OF MARS*, will help keep that myth vital into the new millennium seems a quest as noble as any taken up by the sainted Duke himself.

CFQ

The INVISIBLE MAN

Coffee Cups Floating on Wires? Not on this Souped-Up Revision

By Dan Scapperotti

The television landscape is littered with the remains of shows featuring invisible men, and Matt Greenberg knows it. With writing credits on such films as HALLOWEEN H2O and PROPHECY 2, Greenberg was approached by the USA Network with a proposed invisible man series. "They said they'd like to do a series about an invisible man," said the writer. "My initial reaction was that this whole invisibility thing has been done to death. I knew they were doing HOLLOW MAN, so I originally was going to turn it down. Suddenly in the middle of the night, 3 AM, my eyes popped open. 'QUICKSILVER!'"

In THE INVISIBLE MAN, Darien Fawkes, played by Vincent Ventresca, is a low-level burglar who agrees to become a test-subject for Kevin, his scientist brother. He is implanted with a "quicksilver gland," a creature that secretes a silver hormone that covers Darien's body and renders him invisible. Fortunately, he can shake it off at will.

"It was like negotiating a mine field," said Greenberg, "because I knew that fans, especially science fiction fans, know every trick and turn. So the mandate that I set for myself was to take every expectation of what an invisible man series is and kind of turn it on its ear. That was the

genesis of it. There are so many clichés that we associate with invisibility, like here comes the floating pen and he's taking off his clothes and all that sort of thing. I thought, I'm not going to have my lead walking around naked all the time, and I'm not going to have him invisible all the time, especially when we're paying him X-amount per episode. We want to see the guy."

Having come up with a unique take on the invisible aspects of the show, Greenberg turned his attention to the char-

make this guy a likeable schmuck. Let's give a new twist to the hero concept.

"I came up with [the idea that] this is a guy who in his heart-of-hearts has a good soul, but he was so messed up and turned around. Ironically, once he had this ability, he saw himself much more clearly than he ever had before."

After the death of his brother in the pilot, Darien is hauled in by a clandestine, under-funded government agency headed by "the Offi-

Agency when the Official reveals that he has a temporary antidote. Darien finds himself partnered with Bobby Hobbes



acters. "I began to think about what else we could kind of deconstruct," said the writer. "The one way to go was like Steve Austin: The all-American guy who always makes the right choices. Then I thought, *Let's*

cial," played by veteran actor Eddie Jones. Frequently wracked with pain from the implanted organism and on the verge of madness (shades of Dr. Jack Griffin!), Darien finds himself forced to work for the

(Paul Ben-Victor), a seedy-looking but capable agent with a slight mercenary streak.

In the pilot, Darien originally had an estranged girlfriend, Casey, played by Rebecca Chambers, who is kidnapped by the terrorists. When the show went to series, Casey disappeared. "I originally envisioned the Casey character having a lot more presence," said Greenberg. "Then, when we started planning the series, there just wasn't a way to make it work



with the character's growth and on-going conflicts. That was a shame because Rebecca Chambers did remarkable work."

Another major challenge Greenberg faced was finding a thematic vision for the series. "One of the things that I wrestled with as a writer and creator of the series was trying to find a tone for the series that was somewhat daring but at the same time internally consistent," he said. "My personality tends towards the wacky or the horrific. In my early drafts it would be very wacky or way too horrific." The network wanted the series grounded in reality, which meant that Greenberg had to find a medium between the horror and the comedy. "The thing they really pushed me towards, and in this



QUICKSILVER THINKING: Vincent Ventresca plays a government operative with a few more secrets than normal in the Sci Fi Channel series, *THE INVISIBLE MAN*.

case I'm glad they did, was to create something that had a tone that was still somewhat grounded. That's what I finally did."

After writing and executive producing the pilot and the *INVISIBLE MAN*'s first couple of episodes, illness in the family forced Greenberg to drop out of the project. Enter David Levinson and Jonathan Glasser.

Despite the special effects, Glasser feels that the program is character-driven. "When I was first approached to do the show I thought, *Invisible man!* How

much can you do with that? It's just a guy who's invisible. Then as I got to know the show, I realized the characters are the ones who make it so wonderful. There is a great deal of comedy on the show; there's as much comedy as science fiction. That comes out of our two lead characters and actors who are both very funny guys. You write anything and Vincent Ventresca and Paul Ben-Victor make it twice as funny just by their delivery. Hobbes in particular is just fun. If you put the two guys in a room while you're writing, you can write 20 pages of them just doing their shtick. We have to hold ourselves back because they're so much fun."

For the second season, a new character was added. Actress Brandy Ledford was brought on-board as Alex Monroe, who joins the group with her own agenda, and wants to use the Agency for her own ends. "Brandy is coming in as the tough agent who doesn't put up with their craziness and isn't impressed at all with the invisibility," said Glasser. "She's a lot of fun."

"There were a number of reasons to introduce her. We felt we needed another woman because we only had one, the Keeper, who is wonderful but we had three guys and only one woman. We found a lot of times when we were writing the scripts that we could use another agent in the field because the Keeper is always back at the lab. So we came up with Alex. Brandy is fitting into that very well. She's kind of playing the fifth wheel on purpose, and that's how we're



writing her. She's doing a great job of it."

The show is filmed in San Diego, where the production company, Stu Seagall Production, has its studios. "It's mostly a financial decision," explained Glasser. "We can get more bang for the buck down there. People down there are hungrier to work, and there isn't a lot of production in San Diego."

Encore Video, the visual effects branch of Los Angeles post-house Hollywood Digital, was selected to do the numerous visual effects for the show. Biggest challenge: having to expand on the simple invisibility tricks that were state-of-the-art in 1933, but are mundane by today's standards. "They've done a great job," said Glasser about the effects house. "They're all fans of the show, so they sometimes go beyond the call of duty, which I love. We had an episode where we basically ran out of money because there were a lot of effects in it. There was a shot that I had mentioned off hand that I didn't like, and a few days later the effects guy came in and said 'Here's a freebie.' He had done this amazing effect where you could see through Darien's head."

It seems that almost every week, Darien is called on to sneak into a high-security facility. This provides Glasser and his team their own set of problems. "There are only so many ways he can sneak into some place," said Glasser. "We try to come up with different ones." In "It Hurts When I do This," a script Glasser wrote, Darien has to get into a locked, guarded hospital. The solution was unique: "We had to get him in there, and we didn't just want to follow someone in as we do so often. I had him come to the hospital with the Keeper and just quicksilver his arms. [The Keeper presented him as] a double amputee [who] was feeling phantom limbs, and she had to get him in immediately. The urgency of this double amputee made them let them in! That's the kind of fun stuff that we try to come up with."

CFQ

Three Decades of



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Hand of Kubrick Remains Evident Despite Spielberg's Rewrite

By Joe Fordham

The facts were hard to come by. November, 1993 saw a Warner Bros. press release announcing the official start of development of Stanley Kubrick's A.I., the late film-maker's long-proposed return to science fiction. In December, 1995, another official statement indicated production on A.I. would follow the completion of EYES WIDE SHUT. News of Kubrick's death March 7, 1999, left the Internet abuzz with hearsay and conjecture, but on Wednesday, March 15, 2000, Warner Bros. released a statement to *Variety* and *Hollywood Reporter* announcing that Steven Spielberg would direct and write A.I., with production beginning July 10.

It's now well-known that Kubrick's A.I. is based at least in part on the Brian Aldiss

short story *Super-Toys Last All Summer Long*. With over 30 novels to his name and at least 16 short story collections and 18 non-fiction and editorial credits, prolific novelist and science-fiction author Aldiss made a name for himself with such diverse titles as *Barefoot in the Head* and *Frankenstein Unbound*. Aldiss's exuberant talent came to Kubrick's attention with his 1973 history of science fiction, *Billion Year Spree*, in which the director was nominated as one of the 20th century's greatest authors in the genre, courtesy STRANGELOVE, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and CLOCKWORK ORANGE.

Aldiss recounted in the *London Daily Telegraph* that his first meeting with Kubrick was, "a great and jolly lunch... in, perhaps, 1974," during which he endorsed Philip K. Dick's 1964 *Martian Time Slip* as

possible source material for a new science fiction film. Kubrick instead elected to pursue *Super-Toys*, an obscure Aldiss short story first published in 1969.

Running at only 2,000 words, *Super-Toys* was a tender mood piece told from the point of view of a young boy, David Swinton. Puzzled over his mother's irreconcilable sadness, David confides his concerns to his talking robot bear. This intercuts with his cold, efficient father returning home from work at robot manufacturer, Synthank. David decides somehow he is to blame for his parents' unhappiness, and elects to run away with his robot toy. Boy and bear get as far as the back gate when David's father returns. We then learn that the parents have finally been approved to conceive a real, flesh-and-blood child, as their sad little robot, David, looks on through the window.

From the beginning of their association, Aldiss queried Kubrick's choice of *Super-Toys*. Kubrick argued that 2001 had grown from a similarly tiny seed, Arthur C. Clarke's 1951 *The Sentinel*. "You couldn't argue

with that," was Aldiss's reply.

Despite these early qualms, Aldiss signed a contract to join forces with Kubrick, although the legal stipulations stated Aldiss would receive his £2m compensation for a screenplay based on *Super-Toys* only if that screenplay remained solely credited to him. The first A.I. scenarios included Kubrick's alleged fascination with the Blue Fairy from *Pinocchio*. "I hated the idea," Aldiss stated bluntly. "I would write scripts in which the Blue Fairy would be nuked. That didn't go down well." The success of Spielberg's *E.T.* in 1982 also elicited a response from Kubrick that left Aldiss cold. "He was obsessed with E.T.,"

FOREVER NEVERLAND: Spielberg toned down the more hard-core vision Kubrick sought for A.I.'s Rouge City.



said Aldiss. "E.T. is all very well, but I didn't think that it was the kind of film that Stanley Kubrick should have been making."

Aldiss's £2m prize became a distant hope. He was exhausted, feeling that he had generated enough material to fill three novels. The writer eventually inadvertently triggered his own dismissal by taking a two-week vacation during a hiatus in the A.I. writing schedule. Kubrick felt their contract had been breached. It was an inelegant parting, although the two men continued to exchange Christmas cards up until 1997.

The next A.I. scenarist was the late Bob Shaw. A science-fiction novelist born in Northern Ireland in 1931, who died in 1999 at his home in England, Shaw found Kubrick equally demanding. Aldiss recalled receiving plaintive late night calls shortly after relinquishing the A.I. reins to his successor, with Shaw pleading, "He doesn't like anything. I've run out of ideas, what can I do?"

Enter Ian Watson, another English science-fiction author whose speculative fiction explored the nature of language, most notably in *The Embedding*. The writer claimed to introduce another angle to A.I. in the form of a robot gigolo. But in a March, 1999 issue of the *New Yorker*, Watson painted yet another picture of Kubrick as a reclusive and passionate eccentric with a concern for bees and a love of cats. Little else is known, except that they parted on good terms.

Poet and novelist Sara Maitland stands alone as the only non-genre writer associated with A.I. In an article in the *London Independent*, Maitland surmised that she was chosen by Kubrick to supply the A.I. screenplay with a missing human element. "The project had become enormous, unwieldy, unfocused," she observed. "Kubrick needed some through-line of fairy tale, of story beneath plot. He was creating a new myth... I write about the underbelly of human emotions in the framework of myth and fairy story."

It had been Aldiss's contention that Kubrick chose *Super-Toys* to explore the relationship between the discontented mother and her robot child, reflecting the filmmaker's own anxieties. By the time Maitland was brought in, the *Pinocchio* fascination still held, but she could sense another theme emerging. "He wanted to effect a cultural change," Maitland claimed. "If robots are made by us and act like us, why are they not our children?" According to Maitland, *BLADE RUNNER* had fascinated and annoyed Kubrick with its portrayal of sophisticated machines doomed out-of-hand for their technical prowess. "He believed computers will become truly intelligent—including emotionally—and are potentially a more environmentally-adaptable form of human being," Maitland stated. "They are our future. The film was intended to make us love them." Maitland's contributions to

A.I. were set aside when *EYES WIDE SHUT* began to claim Kubrick's imagination—a project which itself had been 20 years in gestation.

Visual effects artists at San Raphael's Industrial Light and Magic were long-rumored to be linked to A.I. after their ground-breaking *JURASSIC PARK* digital creations reportedly caught Kubrick's eye. ILM spokesperson Ellen Pasternack acknowledged that visual effects supervisor Dennis Muren visited Kubrick several times in England to read the A.I. screenplay and discuss tech-

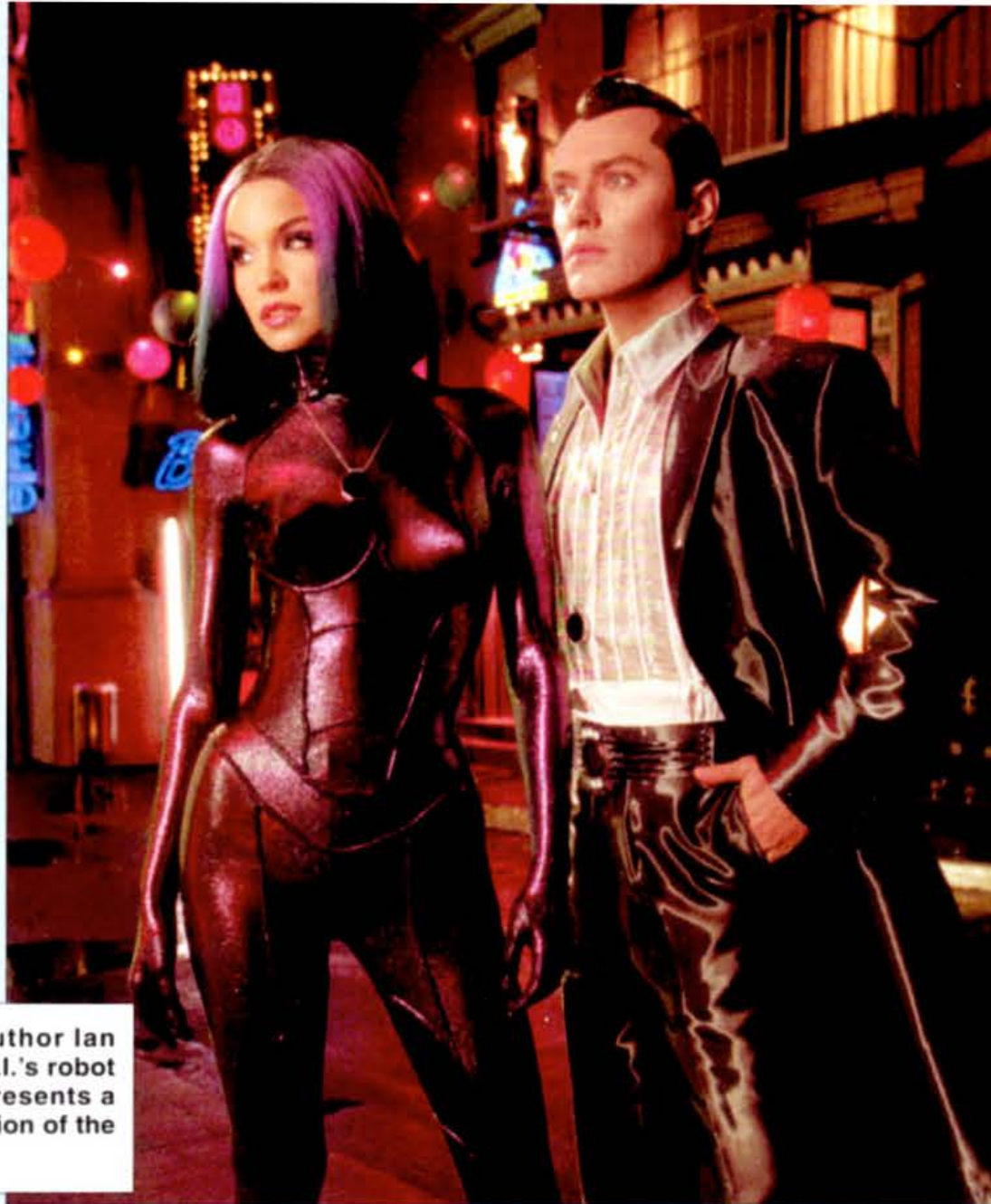
CYBER-DESEXUALIZED: Author Ian Watson has taken credit for A.I.'s robot gigolos, although the film presents a less raunchy, more benign vision of the party-bots.

niques. In an interview with *People Magazine* in June, 1999, Muren recounted his first visit to Kubrick's home in St. Albans, England, accompanied by ILM visual effects producer Ned Gorman, the evening of Thanksgiving Day, 1993.

Describing Kubrick as "a jolly, energetic man who chatted breezily about everything from the latest laserdisc release of *DR. STRANGELOVE* to [the visual effects] of *JURASSIC PARK*," Muren stated, "He'd jump up and say, 'Oh, I gotta show you this!' and he'd come back with a photo he had of the big front-projection system that had been built for 2001. Then he started telling us about some gear he had, including a couple of 70mm cameras that he'd bought for *BARRY LYNDON*. He said he didn't know if he was going to shoot A.I. with them or not." Reflecting on the hardware scattered around Kubrick's home, Gorman also recalled, "I got the impression that Stanley immediately obtained whatever new technology was available, but as soon as it was displaced, it literally got heaved in the corner for the next thing."

After a screening of ILM's latest work, Kubrick proceeded to question his guests intensely until the early hours of the morning. Exhausted but elated, Muren and Gorman returned to ILM, and engaged the services of ILM art director TyRuben Ellingson, who began to conceptualize visions of an Aldiss android boy.

"Kubrick had this idea that this kid should look too perfect to be real," said Ellingson, who went on to describe his attempts to attribute subtle synthetic nuances to an otherwise natural-looking boyish countenance.



"The robot boy's head was designed to have strange proportions, the eyes farther apart than those of a human being, giving the boy an alien look." Ellingson's Photoshop renderings provoked discussions of blending CG and animatronics, and of blending a real performer with a digitally manipulated head. Muren remained in touch with Kubrick throughout production of *EYES WIDE SHUT*, up until a few weeks before the director's death.

In true Kubrick style, the director also phoned the head of Mitsubishi to investigate commission of, "an android that looks like a five-year-old boy." It is known that the director commissioned British music video director Chris Cunningham to spend a year and a half building animatronics in Kubrick's home. Cunningham's fascination for robots dated back to his days as an animatronic designer, when—under his given name Chris Halls—he constructed formidable mechanized ironware for numerous productions, including *JUDGE DREDD*. "I was basically designing robots on my own [for Kubrick], and he'd pop in and we'd work together," Cunningham revealed in an article in the British *New Musical Express*. "He was a really lovely bloke. The press totally got the wrong idea." All Cunningham designs rest with the Kubrick estate.

Spielberg has admitted that the world will never see Stanley Kubrick's A.I., but his intentions are clear in this tribute to the master. To quote the last spoken words in 2001, Kubrick's unrealized dream project will remain, like Kubrick himself, an impenetrable enigma, "its origin and purpose still a total mystery."

CFQ



By Dan Scapperotti

Atop a hill just outside of Boston looms the imposing ruins of the Danvers Mental Institution. The 19th-century facility, long abandoned, has become the backdrop for director Brad Anderson's new horror thriller, *SESSION 9*. While living in the Bay City, Anderson, who co-wrote the screenplay with Stephen Gevedon, frequently passed Danvers and saw the crumbling holdings as the perfect setting for a horror film.

Prior to penning the script, Anderson and Gevedon accompanied a group who, not unlike a bunch of urban spelunkers, spent weekends exploring abandoned buildings, schools, hospitals, and military bases. "They took us on a trip to the Danvers Asylum," said Anderson. "We snuck in one day and wandered around the tunnels and weird rooms, freaking ourselves out. It was from that initial visit that we got ideas for the story. I guess you could say that the location was the seed for the story. It's a great location for a crazy movie."

Anderson came up with the idea of a construction crew hired to remove asbestos from the buildings. The foreman, Gordon Fleming, is in financial trouble and wins the contract by agreeing to finish the job in a

week. He and his five-man crew, working against time, soon find themselves side-tracked by the building itself. One of the workers, played by Gevedon himself, is seduced by psychiatrist's tapes discovered in an abandoned office area. Shortly after, a mysterious figure lends a deadly hand to the proceedings.

SESSION 9 puts a unique spin on the urban-horror theme. There are no screaming teenagers. No nudity. Instead an all-male construction team is the focus of the killer. "I like exploring mentally or psychically disturbed characters," said Anderson. "Horror is sort of like comedy, in a sense that it's all in timing. In comedy, it's making people laugh and hitting the joke; how it's cut, building up expectations in the audience, and then delivering the punch line or whatever it may be. In horror, it's the same thing. But instead of making people laugh, you're kind of trying to make them cringe, or turn their head away, or make the hair go up on the back of their necks. I feel there is a certain similarity in how you create the structure of the comedy, so making the leap from making these comedies to making a horror film wasn't that great."

Having control of his film projects is important to Anderson—in addition to co-writing

SESSION 9, he also edited. "As a filmmaker, I want to concoct and explore other stories. I don't want to be pigeonholed as a guy who makes only one kind of movie. I want to learn how to tell different stories. Cinema is more suited to horror than anything else. You're in a dark room surrounded by strangers. It's a perfect place to creep yourself out."

While the building seems to exert a strange fascination for some members of the crew, leading them into its dark recesses, the killing force is something different. "It is a kind of catalyst," Anderson explained. "When in the end we discover who is responsible for the killings, in some ways the building is a catalyst for causing him to do the awful things that he does. It's not so much that the building is possessed and is causing him to do these things, it's more that it creates the setting that allows him to do these things and become a lunatic and a murdering monster. It's not like *THE HAUNTING*, where the building has a life of its own; it just creates the atmosphere. It's not a haunted-house movie. It's about a man realizing that he's a monster and the building helps him do that."

The film's co-author, Stephen Gevedon, also stars in the film as Mike, the character who develops a fascination for the old psychiatric evaluations. Having his partner on the set came in handy for Anderson. "When I was directing, he was just a member of the cast," said

the director. "He could sometimes help convey to the actors what we were trying to do and what we were going for in a certain scene. Collaborating with someone, from my perspective, is a good thing, because he can be a sounding board that I can bounce things off. In any movie, you're changing things as you go along. On a movie like this where you're on location, there is a limited amount of time to shoot. You've got to be flexible, and Steve was really helpful."

David Caruso, whose career has stumbled since he decided to leave the cast of *NYPD BLUE*, was brought in to play Phil, an edgy character who realizes that Gordon is pushing the job beyond its limits. Conflicts kept other actors from committing to the role, but Caruso—amongst the last to be cast—was able to fit it into his schedule. "He was willing to come to Boston on very short notice," said Anderson. "In the last two years, he's gotten the reputation for being difficult... but he turned out to be a great guy to work with; he kept everything comfortable. I had no problems with him."

"He internalizes this weird frantic energy as an actor. He has a sort of untrustworthiness to him: You don't trust him, and that's what we wanted. We wanted to set him up as a guy who could lose it. He's got an anger to him, a latent anger in his personality that we could capitalize on. You don't want a sweet sort of charming guy to play Phil; he's got to be tense, nervous, and a little bit flipped out."

Gordon Fleming is played by Scottish actor Peter Mullan,

SESSION 9



THE PLACE IS THE THING: A genuine mental hospital became the inspirational spark for the cursed institution that holds blue-collar workers David Caruso (upper left) and Stephen Gevedon (above) in its thrall.

who received a Best Actor Award at Cannes three years ago for his performance as a violent alcoholic in *MY NAME IS JOE*. As Fleming, Mullan is a man driven by his own personal demons while fighting to keep his floundering construction company afloat. Although the part wasn't written as an immigrant, Mullan and Anderson decided to incorporate the actor's accent into the character. "He had a working-class vibe to him," said Anderson. "He grew up as a working-class guy in Glasgow, and that was what we were looking for. Some actors don't want to play a dark character, but he wanted to take some chances."

"Gordon comes here to pursue every American's God-given right to the pursuit of happiness. He finds himself in a bind: the kid; the job's tough; money is hard to get. Now he's a working-class guy in America, just like he was overseas, so things aren't rosy. Deep in the subtext of the movie is that here is a guy who has failed the American dream drastically. There was part of that that was intriguing and he

wanted to play that out. In Boston, there are a lot of Irish and Scottish immigrants. We pared the script a little to accommodate that new twist—a lot of the patients in this asylum were immigrants: Italian, Irish immigrants who came over here and, because they had difficulty assimilating into this culture, were felt to be mentally ill. That was a weird, but interesting connection to the past."

A difficult location and a mere 20-day shooting schedule were the main challenges facing Anderson when he started filming. "We were in a very precarious and somewhat dangerous location," the director said. "This place is really falling to pieces. Floors are collapsing; most of the buildings are condemned; and there is also a sort of mold everywhere. You've got a few dozen people on the cast and crew in this location and you're pushing them hard because you have a very limited amount of time to make the movie. You're always worried that there are going to be accidents; someone is going to get hurt. We were all living camped out up there. It was really tricky." *CFQ*

A Little Byte of Soul, Part 2

By Dennis Kleinman

I confess that I originally came to bury A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, not to praise it. Based on my first impressions, I certainly would have. The instant the closing credits came up, my 14-year-old son and I turned and simultaneously said to each other, "That sucked!" This moment of intergenerational consensus was not an isolated one. All around us, other less-than-satisfied moviegoers were mouthing similar, if less printable, epithets.

The next day, the "That sucked"-fest continued. The first acquaintance of mine I encountered couldn't wait to tell me how much he despised A.I. He then proceeded to tick off all the things he found wrong with it: holes in the plot big enough to drive an 18-wheeler through; turns in the story so contrived a precocious five-year-old could spot them; unappealing performances; endless exposition; hackneyed themes. Real

amateur stuff.

Amateur stuff? The collaboration of two of the most accomplished filmmakers of the last fifty years? What went wrong? And more intriguingly, why were people so pissed off about it?

Originally, I put the blame solidly in Spielberg's corner. That whole robot/*Pinocchio* thing—too treacly for Kubrick. It must have been an attempt by Spielberg to make what must have been extremely thought-provoking material accessible to the thoughtless masses. Besides being too sweet, it also tasted stale. The character of Data, in *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*, was used to explore this theme endlessly, and with much more sensitivity and intelligence. As I recall, Ryker actually called Data "Pinocchio" in the premier episode. Kubrick never would have gone with such an obvious retreat.

But there it was, about a half-hour into the movie: David, our little mechanical boy, being read *Pinocchio* as a bed-time story. How Spielberg! How *HOOK*! Might as well grab the coats and the kiddies and head for the exit; you know exactly what's going to happen: David will have some scary adventures, meet some kooky but endearing characters, then, as the John Williams score kicks into overdrive, he'll become a *real boy*. Uplift, affirmation,

sweetness, and light. There won't be a dry eye in the house; you're in Spielberg Country.

Clearly, Kubrick, the man who brought us a rape scene set to the tune of *Singing in the Rain*, had something more daringly dissonant in mind. But just as clearly, Spielberg, ever the movie-marketing maven, felt compelled to simplify it, warm it up, make it accessible to the lowest common denominator. Stanley, the ultimate cinematic iconoclast, had turned his *opus posthumous* over to Steven, the ultimate cinematic panderer, who proceeded to make a commercial sow's ear out of an artistic silk purse. He even added a cute little mechanical teddy bear, perfect for the kiddies at Christmas. The clash of these cinematic titans was too much for one movie to bear. The result was a joyless, confused mess. No wonder it scored so high on the public suck-o-meter.

In tribute to Kubrick's (and my own) genius, I put *Also Sprach Zarathustra* on the CD player, cranked up the volume, and started writing what was sure to be a landmark in corrosive movie criticism. But just as the monumental theme from 2001 was climaxing, memories came rushing back to me of my first viewing of the movie that is now considered by many to be Kubrick's masterpiece. My first impressions? I *despised* it. The

acting, the story, the themes, everything beneath contempt, except the far-out light show at the end.

More movies paraded before my eyes: *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, *BARRY LYNDON*, *THE SHINING*. It didn't take long to realize that my initial impression of just about every Kubrick movie was strongly negative. I wasn't alone in this. The entire Kubrick canon—except maybe *SPARTACUS*, on which he was more of a hired gun—had large segments of the audience walking away saying, "That sucked!" A recent example is the poor reception given to *EYES WIDE SHUT*.

It was only on repeated viewings, sometimes over the span of decades, that I began to "get" these movies. They defied all the expectations I had been trained to bring with me to the movies: likeable lead characters; plenty of action; upbeat endings. If anything, Kubrick *assaulted* your expectations, undermined your confidence in the attitudes we take for granted and which we use to justify our existence. No wonder they made audiences so mad.

Then came the big question: Had I been fooled again? *Moi?*

I reviewed some of the scenes from A.I. Guess what? I had indeed come to A.I. with a set of expectations, expectations based entirely on the fact that it was a

Steven Spielberg movie, one with a child in the lead. This is an important distinction, because Spielberg is nothing if not a protean filmmaker. There is the action/adventure Spielberg of *JURASSIC PARK* and *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*. There is the "mature" Spielberg of *SHINDLER'S LIST* and *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN*. Then there is my least favorite Spielberg: the child-centric one of *E.T.* and *HOOK*. It is in these latter movies that Spielberg reveals his treacly, romantic soul; idealizing the freedom, wonder, and

A.I. Artificial Intelligence

Warner Bros., 2001. Starring Haley Joel Osment, Jude Law, Frances O'Connor, William Hurt. Directed by Steven Spielberg. Screen Story by Ian Watson; Screenplay by Steven Spielberg; Based on the Short Story *Supertoys Last All Summer Long* by Brian Aldiss. Produced by Bonnie Curtis, Kathleen Kennedy, Steven Spielberg. Cinematography: Janusz Kaminski. PG-13 (U.S.)



creative spirit of childhood and setting it off against the constricted, rule-bound world of adults.

On reflection, I can say with some confidence that none of the qualities mentioned in the preceding paragraph applies to A.I., though it took a remarkable amount of re-examination on my part to see beyond my expectations. I now realize that I had watched the entire movie and not actually *seen* it. What I thought I saw was a movie that failed to live up to my treacly, romantic, Spielbergian expectations. What was actually on the screen was a bleak meditation on man's disastrous tendency to not think through the implications of his actions—more *Frankenstein* than *Pinocchio*.

At the start of the film, we meet our Geppetto character, Dr. Hobby, played by William Hurt (Even his name connotes a man who is playing, who lacks serious commitment). We hear him giving a rather long-winded explanation as to why he is going to create a "mecha" (an artificially-intelligent robot) that can love.

If we take all this at face value, and accept Dr. Hobby as a benign father-figure who wants nothing more than to bring joy into the lives of others, then we have missed the point, as I did the first time around. (Having the attractive, avuncular Mr. Hurt in the role, the audience *expects* him to be a selfless do-gooder.) As I see it now, Hurt is the villain of this story, a self-deluded mad scientist playing with the most powerful and uncontrollable force in the universe: love.

And so, David (Haley Joel Osment, in a creepy, one-note performance) is created, and adopted by the Swintons, a couple traumatized by the belief that they have just lost their only son. From the outset, David is a misfit. Obsessed with the human mother he is algorithmically bonded to (Frances O'Connor, in a weepy, one-note performance) he makes mistake after mistake, each one more disruptive than the last, until his parents finally decide to rid themselves of him. In A.I., life-style takes precedence over responsibility.

Abandoned, unable to comprehend what has happened, incapable of ever developing that comprehension, David, like *Pinocchio*, journeys across the strangely beautiful and frightening landscape, looking for the Blue Fairy who will grant him his one wish:

to have his mother back, a reunion which somehow, we are led to believe, will make him into a real boy.

Joining him in his quest is Jude Law as Gigolo Joe. Joe is a mecha designed and created to do just one thing: please a human sexual partner—just like David, he was born to love. This aptitude has made Joe, and others like him, a threat to certain humans who feel they can't compete where it matters most. In one of the movie's most spectacular scenes, Joe and David watch as a bunch of androids are eviscerated in a heavy-metal night-rally of destruction, exterminated by a mob of humans who are determined to make the world *mechafrei* before the sexual performance bar is raised any higher.

The convergence of machines and human sexuality is a theme that Kubrick explores often, most brilliantly in *DR. STRANGE-LOVE*, where guns and bombs not only look like phallises, they always seem to wind up between men's legs. But the movie that A.I. is closest to in terms of theme is 2001. Like Hal, the computer who is created to tell the truth then driven insane when he is programmed to lie, David and Joe are the victims of the selfishness, hypocrisy, and lack of humanity of the humans that created them. Like many monster movies, *FRANKENSTEIN* included, A.I. is about the tragedy of bad parenting.

Does David find the Blue Fairy and get his wish? Of course he does. Is it a happy ending? Hard to tell. Once again, you can feel the master's hand here. The ending of a Kubrick movie is always a kind of open-ended, often profound puzzle, and A.I. is no different. But even if the ending is a happy one, it is the one optimistic spot in an otherwise bleak and pessimistic movie, one that defies our expectations at every turn—which might explain why so many people were angry about it. And why Kubrick would probably have been delighted.

Did Kubrick, the consummate games-player, choose Spielberg precisely because he wanted the audience to bring all those expectations with it to the theater? Possibly. Did Kubrick intend David's story to have broader implications about every boy's unresolved obsession with his mother. Quite possibly. Is A.I. a good movie? That all depends on your expectations. Let's just say it doesn't suck.

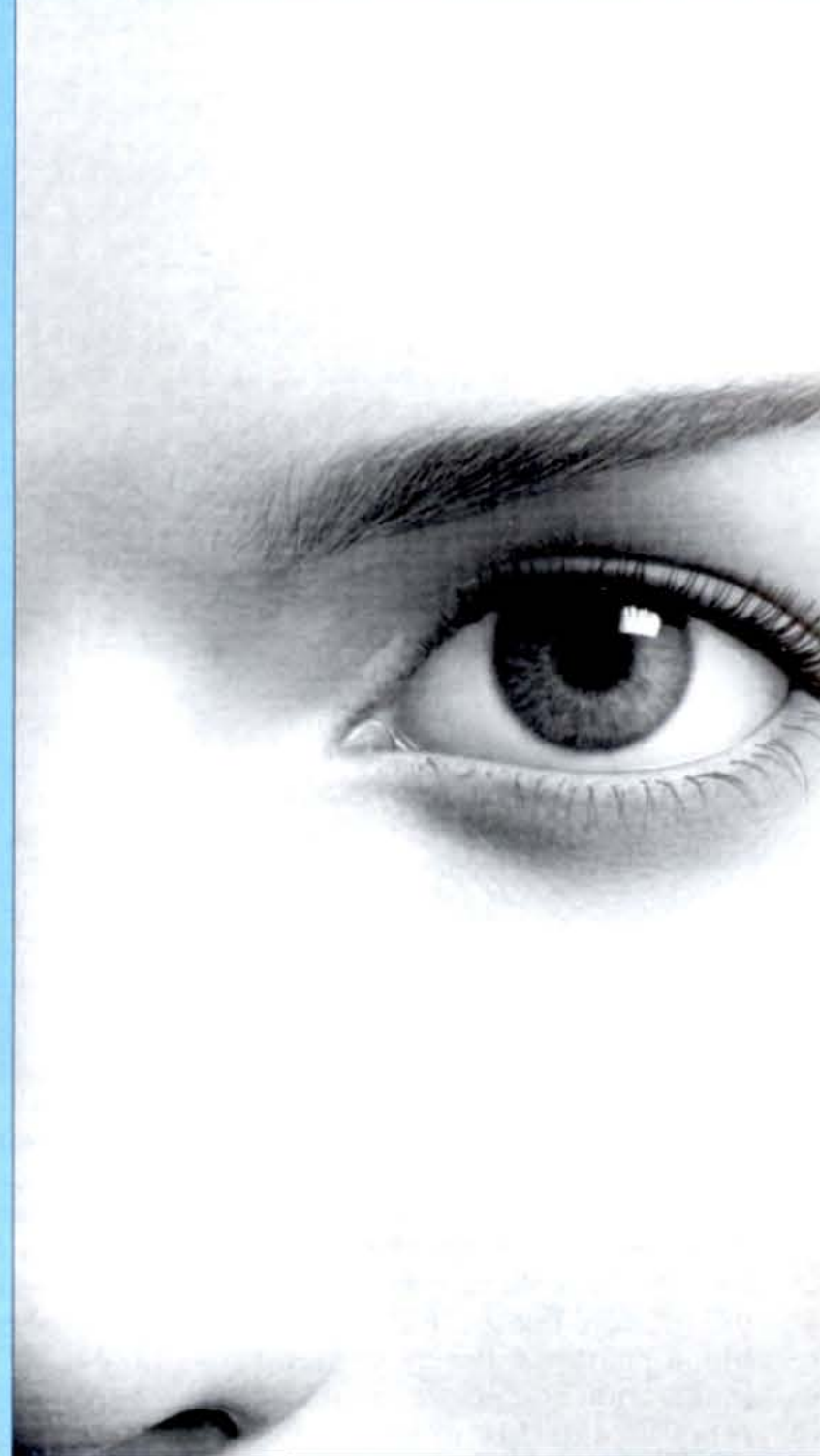


If *THE MUMMY RETURNS* and *SHREK* weren't enough to convince you that the digital hour is upon us, *FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN* is required viewing. An SF/war movie in the tradition of *ALIENS*, *FINAL FANTASY* raises the reality bar higher than *SHREK*, giving us characters whose every hair seems blown in the wind, whose eyes reflect objects in the immediate vicinity, whose skin has pores. The movement isn't quite as smooth as live action—there were actually some moments when I was reminded of the marionettes they used to have on shows like *THUNDERBIRDS*. But this

is quibbling. A fully-realized, fully-believable three-dimensional world, peopled by living, breathing characters, has been achieved solely through digital means. SAG members, take note.

Having worked so hard to create the illusion of real characters in a real environment, *FINAL FANTASY* then proceeds to show you why this is such a good idea. Characters fly through the air with the greatest of ease. They march through settings straight out of your wildest dreams. And the monsters—amorphous, diaphanous shapes that can suck out your soul—are, for want of a better term, mind-blowing.

Unfortunately, like *THE MUMMY RETURNS*, the moviemakers' imaginations stop at the surface of things. The characters are horribly clichéd, and the dialogue is full of standard issue quips and nostrums. Even more disconcerting, the movie suffers from what I call *GHIDRAH SYNDROME*. This is a tendency in Japanese movies and anime to leave the audience out of the



Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

Columbia, 2001. Voice Artists: Ming-Na, Alec Baldwin, Peri Gilpin, Donald Sutherland, James Woods. Directed by Hironobu Sakaguchi and Motonori Sakakibara. Written by Al Reinart & Jeff Vintar. Produced by Jun Aida, Chris Lee, Akio Sakai. Cinematography by Motonori Sakakibara. PG (U.S.)

knowledge loop. Everyone on screen seems to have access to a secret fund of esoteric knowledge. ("Look, it's Ghidrah, the three-headed, flying space-dragon from Mars! He can only be destroyed by a combination of phosphorous, sea water, and paprika!")

I hate endless exposition as much as the next guy. A.I. had way too much of it. But *FINAL FANTASY*, like many a Japanese SF flick, has far too little, frustrating the audience's attempts to get involved in the story, to identify with the struggle, and to build anticipation to the climax. Imagine Obi-Won mentioning the Force to Luke for the first time just before he had to fire his weapon to destroy the Death Star, and everyone knowing exactly what he is talking about.

Everyone except you.

CFO

FILM RATINGS

●●●●	Must see
●●●	Excellent
●●	Good
●	Mediocre
○	Read a Book

BATTLE ROYALE

Director: Kinji Fukasaku, Toei, 2001. With: Beat Takeshi, Tatsuya Fujiwara, Aki Maeda, Taro Yamamoto, Masanobu Ando, Kou Shibasaki.

"Maestro of Mayhem" Kinji Fukasaku's futuristic nightmare about a sinister kill-or-be-killed game forced on unruly high school kids is shockingly violent, crudely poignant, and satirically heavy-handed in equal measure. Based on Koshun Takami's hugely popular book-turned-Manga, and engendering political controversy of *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* kind in Japan, *BATTLE ROYALE* takes its literary and visual inspiration from a number of media sources including *The Lord of the Flies*, *WILD IN THE STEETS*, *CLASS OF 1984*, *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME*, and *SURVIVOR*. More a visually impressive, gladiatorial body-count spectacle than a deeply meaningful rumination on how those too young to understand life can even grapple with the thought of sudden death, Fukasaku's blood-spattered frenzy of moral indignation and poetic grisliness remains a darkly provocative, gruesomely compelling, and quite astonishing work, despite a muddled opening, minimal hints of character exposition, and a ludicrously illogical ending. What remains in memory are the nasty ways the psychologically ill-equipped school kids relentlessly go about decimating each other

under hard-hitting, childish duress. (The film under review is the Director's Cut, to be released internationally). ●●●● Alan Jones

DONNIE DARKO

Writer/Director: Richard Kelly, Pandora, 2001. With: Jake Gyllenhaal, Jena Malone, Drew Barrymore, Noah Wyle.

So this is what would've happened if David Lynch had gotten a crack at *FINAL DESTINATION*. Set in 1988—mostly, it seems, so they can use some of the hookiest songs of alienation ever recorded (Tears for Fears and similar artists are prominent on the soundtrack)—the story follows Donnie, a budding teenage borderline schizophrenic, as he's guided through an alt-temporal suburbia by a spectral visitor dressed amusingly in a death's-head bunny suit. On the one hand, one gets the uncomfortable sense that this is what happens when Hollywood "does" surreal—for all the strange goings on, there's rarely the sense that things have spun breathlessly out-of-control (and the seemingly market-driven cast of callow youths doesn't help reduce the impression). On the other hand, you can't deny that director Kelly frequently has you hooked: the film is never less than engaging, and by the end—which may be interpreted as either an exercise in ambiguity or just plain confusing, depending on your point of view—you may well find yourself unexpectedly affected. There is a working intellect behind this, thank God, and, besides, Jake Gyllenhaal does a killer menacing glower. ●●● Dan Persons

FAUST: LOVE OF THE DAMNED

Director: Brian Yuzna. Starring Mark Frost, Isabel Brook, Andrew Divoff, Jeffrey Combs.

When you sell your soul to the devil, you have to expect certain drawbacks, like coming back as a demon, slaughtering innocent people for the devil's kicks. Which is exactly what happens to mild-mannered painter John Jaspers after his girlfriend is murdered by ruthless thugs and the mysterious M offers him power beyond his wildest imagination. The long-awaited film version of the popular gore-soaked comic book will prove to be a welcome return for director Yuzna, who here proves he hasn't forgotten what he learned from his stylish partner Stuart Gordon. While the movie never really reaches the level of brutality the books were known for, it doesn't skimp either. And in these recent times, when horror has been watered down for mass-market consumption, *FAUST*'s high body-count and occasional nudity conjure up the horror-fans' "good ol' days" of '80s splatter. While much grimmer in tone, *FAUST* really works to recapture the thrill-ride formula of Yuzna's earlier productions: bloody, gruesome, excessive, never boring. ●● Mike Watt

JOHN CARPENTER'S GHOSTS OF MARS

Director: John Carpenter. Screen Gems, 2001. With: Ice Cube, Natasha Henstridge, Jason Statham, Pam Grier, Clea Duvall, Joanna Cassidy.

When the leader of the Martian warriors first showed himself, my guest leaned over and said, "I didn't know Glenn Danzig was in this movie." Carpenter apparently still thinks that scary is one latex-and stage-blood-decorated guy striding purposefully down the street while leading a bunch of other, similarly bedecked people. It wasn't scary in *VAMPIRES* and it isn't scary here.

I really wanted this to be a John Carpenter classic. What I got were Martian cities that look like bad matte paintings, special effects makeup from the bargain basement of a Halloween store, and good performances that struggle mightily in the face of bad dialogue. It's a darn shame, since the idea of the film is superb: on a terraformed Mars, an ancient force is released and the ghosts of Martian warriors seek to rid their planet of its invaders by possessing the bodies of human beings. The fight scenes are top notch,

Carpenter's techno/metal score is outstanding, and viewers are given a tantalizing glimpse of the Martian past that left me wanting to see more. Better than *VAMPIRES*, this is still not, by any means, the great Carpenter film I so wanted to see. Maybe next time. ●● Denise Dumars

JEEPERS CREEPERS

Written and directed by Victor Salva, MGM/UA, 2001. With: Gina Philips, Justin Long, Jonathan Breck, Eileen Brennan.

"Every 23 Springs for 23 days," intones self-proclaimed police psychic Jezelle Gay Hartman (Patricia Belcher), "the creature comes looking for things—human things—to eat. What he eats, he becomes. It is what keeps him alive."

On their way home from college in Florida, Darry (Justin Long) and Trish (Gina Philips) stumble upon the hideout of the aforementioned creature, called "the Creeper." Trying to elude him turns out to be impossible: When he is not pursuing in an armored, rusted truck, he is flying above on giant bat's wings. Eliminating him is just as hopeless: he proves to be indestructible. *JEEPERS CREEPERS* at first seems like a *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* rip-off, complete with a hideous, seemingly invulnerable villain. Where it differs is that there is a deadly seriousness to the film, without so much as a hint of Freddy-like humor to relieve the anxiety. *JEEPERS CREEPERS*—the title comes from the old song, which, when played on a car radio or an old phonograph, is a prelude to a creature attack—is not without some plot holes. It is somewhat difficult to figure out why the Creeper has this obsessive need to stay alive. And just exactly what is the Creeper? Is he a man, a winged demon, a spirit, a shapeshifter? It is never fully explained. Characters appear and disappear all too quickly, perhaps their only reason for being around is to provide increasingly bizarre encounters with the Creeper. Yet it cannot be denied that writer/director Victor Salva (*POWDER*, *NATURE OF THE BEAST*, *CLOWNHOUSE*) has created his own nightmare, a film that in its brutality, suspense, and gut-wrenching horror is very difficult to shake off. ●●● Mitch Persons

JURASSIC PARK III

Director: Joe Johnston, Universal, 2001. With: Sam Neill, William H. Macy, Tea Leoni, Michael Jeter.

Just goes to show that if you



Ghosts of Mars

need someone to carry a movie, call Sam Neill, not Jeff Goldblum. Neill gets dragooned by power couple Macy and Leoni into returning to the islands of *really big* lizards in order to participate in a rescue mission, a trip that—big surprise—goes wrong right from the get-go. Forget character development. I don't know which was more disturbing: Leoni's lack of caring when her boyfriend is found gorily deceased or her overly-excited reaction to her ex-husband's newly buff body (come to think of it, William H. Macy with muscles is kind of disturbing all by itself).

JP3 has a new bad guy, even badder than T-Rex. He's called "Spinosaurus," and he's the largest dino predator discovered to date. Add Pteranodons and ever-evolving velociraptors, a plucky kid in danger, and lots of dinos eating people and, well, you've got a fun film that's barely 90 minutes long but seems to go by in about ten. Leoni may have found her niche as a scream queen, and Johnston proves that he's one of the best special effects/action directors there is. The ending does seem tacked-on—you'll be forgiven for wondering if something important leading up to it had been excised. Nevertheless, recommendations for JP3. Dinosaurs eating people. I could watch that all day long.

●●● Denise Dumars

THE OTHERS

Directed by Alejandro Amenabar, Dimension Films, 2001. With: Nicole Kidman, Fionnula Glanigan, Christopher Eccleston, Alakina Mann.

In the realm of haunted-house stories, *THE OTHERS* owes more to Henry Miller than Roger Corman. Nicole Kidman gives an Oscar-caliber performance as Grace, a woman living in a fog-shrouded country estate with her two photosensitive children. She keeps the drapes tightly closed to prevent any light from penetrating the rooms and gives orders that no door is to be opened until the other door to the room is closed. The children, however, are aware of the strange presence of intruders in the house, especially a boy named "Victor." Fionnula Glanigan plays Mrs. Mills, the housekeeper who mysteriously arrives with two other servants. She nails the role with just the right touch of servitude and an arcane knowledge she's not ready to share with the lady of the house. Spanish director Alejandro Amenabar, who also wrote the eerie screenplay, maintains a claustrophobic atmosphere enhanced by having the dialogue

spoken mostly in whispers or hushed tones. Glossy special effects have been replaced by a mood brought on by human sensitivity. It's the people we're involved with, not the house.

●●● Dan Scapperotti

PLANET OF THE APES

Directed by Tim Burton, Fox, 2001. With: Mark Wahlberg, Helena Bonham Carter, Tim Roth, Estella Warren.

Tim Burton's current "reinterpretation" of *PLANET OF THE APES* is a triumph of summer cinema, at least in certain, selected categories. The ape makeup is more expressive and the ape movements more evocative, but by far it's greatest triumph is undoubtedly in... promotion. It must have cost them a fortune to persuade everyone that this was not a remake, but a new film with a new twist ending vastly different from the original. Sorry guys, didn't work.

This remake would not have been such a crime if the journey to the twist-climax had been a little more engaging. Burton's films have always been very long on design and visual style, and rather short on internal logic and consistency. *POTA* essentially covers the same themes and stories of the venerable saga, but manages to be less enthralling. The apes are more apelike, and Burton's affection and reverence for the Franklin Schaffner version is obvious, but it all falls rather flat. There's no real sense of outrage displayed by fallen astronaut Leo (Mark Wahlberg) at how humans are mistreated by the apes. There's no stratification of the ape society (chimps, orangutans, and gorillas), and no clear sense of a hidden knowledge of the apes' origin. There remain a few wry quips, like Thane (Tim Roth) prying open Wahlberg's mouth and yelling, "Is there a soul in there?" and especially a scene in which Charlton Heston gives a lecture on the evils of guns and, noting their creation by humans, finishes with his classic, "Damn Them All to Hell!" It's ingeniously ironic, but more as an external homage to a bona-fide classic rather than a sly



subversion of conventions for which Burton is renowned.

● Larry Tetewski

SHE CREATURE

Writer/Director: Sebastain Gutierrez, Cinemax, 2001. With: Rufus Sewell, Carla Gugino, Gil Bellows.

The resurrection of a title out of the Sam Arkoff archives suggests another helping of extended camp—as in the Roger Corman remakes of a few years ago—and the opening sequence fairly screams *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. But getting further into the story of an Irish carnival operator (Sewell) transporting a living mermaid to the U.S., one discovers that the template here is more on the lines of Jacques Tourneur: nuance and atmosphere hold sway, along with convincing performances from a far-better-than-average cast. Unfortunately, a storyline confined mostly to the sailboat transporting the watery (and in a bow to the spirit of B-movies, topless) cargo and an attempt to offer some unconvincing observations on gender politics undo the film's strengths, and things aren't helped by the penultimate arrival of a monster that seems contractually mandated to justify Stan Winston's participation in the project. The first of a series of made-for-cables called, collectively, *CREATURE FEATURES*, this could have been far better, yet remains a credible attempt to reintroduce genuine

style and drama to horror.

●● Dan Persons

LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER

Directed by Simon West, Paramount Pictures, 2001. With: Angelina Jolie, Jon Voight, Iain Glen, Noah Taylor.

The promise was there but not the heart. With a built-in audience, director Simon West had the opportunity to create a blistering adventure film that could rival Indiana Jones, but he and the powers-that-be at the studio blew it. A powerful secret society is after an ancient artifact. Following an attack on her country estate, Croft is out to stop them. The film has a distinct feeling that Senator Lieberman was looking over their shoulders: Angelina Jolie looks great as the distaff relic hunter and the action sequences—composed of video-game-inspired teenybopper fights rather than violence—are fine for Saturday-morning kid shows, but not for a big budget adventure film. You never get the feeling that Croft and company are ever in any real danger; *XENA* aimed higher than this. With human targets an apparent no-no, Croft must pit her skills against an array of computer-generated contraptions. Even the target of the quest is too complicated: instead of battling for a clear-cut goal—say, the Ark of the Covenant—Lara must bring separate pieces of an ancient artifact together in time and space. The film remains one of the big disappointments of the summer.

● Dan Scapperotti

Keepers of the Flame...

I am glad to see that *Cinefantastique* is poised to continue with the vigorous spirit Frederick S. Clarke originated. I am particularly pleased to note the return of some features that had been missing in recent years: *CFQ Preview* (missing since *Release Chart*, December, 1999 [31:9]); *CFQ News* (missing since *Hollywood Gothic*, February, 2000 [31:10]); *Reviews* [31:9]; and *Letters* (May, 1999 [31:5]).

I wish you all good fortune in continuing with Mr. Clarke's project. It is a worthy tribute to his memory.

Michael J. Dunn
Auburn, WA

I would like to compliment you on the April, 2001 [33:1/2] issue of your magazine. The double issue featuring *Farscape* is absolutely fabulous! The articles by Anna Kaplan were informative and insightful. I especially liked the interviews with the cast and the episode guide. Hopefully we can see an update when Season Three of *Farscape* has finished showing.

Thank you again for a wonderful issue.

Sheila Owens
sowens@paducah.k12.ky.us

Just want to say that I've been buying your magazine since 1971. I've collected many magazines of this type, but you have always been the best, and continue to be so. Thanks for all these years of top quality, integrity, and entertainment.

Bob Gobleder
Bellwood, IL

Way to go! *Cinefantastique*, with its coverage of *FARSCAPE* Seasons One and Two [33:1/2] was terrific! One of the problems with any series is to keep it in some sort of order. TV guides tend to list simply "FARSCAPE," and rarely provide title or description. You have made it easy with your program guides, with production numbers and precis for each story. It certainly made the \$11.95 cost less onerous. Can't wait for your coverage of the next and future seasons.

In any case, keep up the good work.

Donald R. Baker
New York, NY

I would like to compliment you on the April, 2001 issue of *Cinefantastique*. Your magazine is better than such entertainment magazines as *Rolling Stone*, *People*, *Us*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. Keep up the fine work!

Allen Leaird
Colgate, OK

...or Extinguishers?

This is a letter from a concerned fan who first discovered *Cinefantastique* with its PLANET OF THE APES issue back in Volume One. Like any devoted fan, I have each and every copy of your publication (two copies whenever there was a dual-cover issue). In Britain, getting your magazine is more of a challenge. I'm proud of my collection, and genuinely look forward to each issue, luxuriating in your double-sized ones whenever they come along, densely packed with episode guides and well-researched features.

Following Fred Clarke's death, however, *Cinefantastique* seems to have changed, within the space of a few issues, to something lighter and less substantial. Okay, the articles from your regular contributors are unchanged, but the magazine's layout—with empty photopages to start the features and large font size—is not appealing. Articles like the one on THE BIRDS in Vol. 33 No. 3, "interpreting" Hitchcock's thoughts—somewhat liberally—are not meant for *Cinefantastique*, more *Cinescape*. In fact, the magazine seems to be sliding towards a teen, "easy-read" audience: bigger pictures, bigger text, less substance.

Perhaps the quality of the last 33 years was embodied in Frederick Clarke. Sadly, *Cinefantastique* is losing its sense of wonder!

Robert Poole
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Back to THE BUNKER

I'd like to correct a slightly misleading impression given by the article on UK horror feature THE BUNKER, in issue 33:3. Although I'm sure director Rob Green didn't intend it, his comments about my original screenplay come across as rather disparaging, as well as being inaccurate.

By apparently saying that my

first draft was "more about zombies in tunnels," Rob is doing me a disservice. To suggest that I needed to be "pushed... to make it more psychological" is also a little ungenerous. In fact, my first draft utilized as much of the Val Lewton approach to horror as did my final draft—not surprising, since this was my intended approach from the very conception. What changed was simply the "reason" behind the horrific events—a physical supernatural manifestation in the first draft, becoming a ghostly supernatural manifestation in the final draft. If anyone is deserving of credit for the changes I made during my self-financed, eight-year development of the project, it is screenwriting guru Robert McKee. His Horror Genre lecture is inspiring, and it was his guidelines I tried to follow whilst working out my various rewrites of the script.

Other than that, Alan Jones' article was excellent, and I'm sure Rob would be the first to wish any misunderstanding be put right, especially in a publication as influential as *Cinefantastique*.

Clive Dawson
Writer, THE BUNKER

Did Stanislavsky Cast This SHADOW?

Your review of SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE [33:1/2] was the only one I've read anywhere in which the reviewer believes that the Orlock character was a method actor who got lost in his role. Every other review I've seen takes it as the basic premise that Schreck really was a vampire. That's certainly what I believed as I watched the film.

Nick Martin
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Apparently your "reviewer," Mr. Paul Wardle, has seen a "different" version of SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE. In the film that all my friends and I saw, the Max Schreck character is a vampire. He's not a method actor who gets engrossed in his role. The whole film, in fact, is about the fictional Murnau deceiving all of his friends in order to get a real bloodsucker on film, caught in the act, as it were. Now the film Mr. Wardle saw does sound interesting and rather more realistic than the one I saw. I'd like to

know where to see it.

E. Sumer
New York, NY

[Watch the film again, ideally in the DVD edition. While the idea that Max Schreck is an actual vampire is certainly a conclusion one could draw from the events presented, in fact it is never explicitly stated that he is such. In many cases, characters and dialogue suggest that he is indeed an actor who has taken his role too far to heart. This impression is reinforced in the follow-up interviews on the DVD, where several participants refer to the character as a method actor who's become obsessed with his role. Paul Wardle's interpretation may break from consensus, but it certainly is not inapt. - ed.]

Kleinman Kudos

I agree with Dennis Kleinman that MEMENTO is a very good film [33:3:60]. As for being completely original, though, I'm not so sure. Back in 1994, Dana Carvey starred in a movie called CLEAN SLATE, about a detective who wakes up every day with his mind wiped clean.

Like Mr. Kleinman, I hope narrative is still alive, but it has been years since I've sat in a theater and watched a film without feeling *deja vu*.

Joe Moschetti
Castro Valley, CA

Just wanted to commend Dennis Kleinman on his thorough and compelling analysis of THE BIRDS [33:3:50]. His ideas on the root of the birds' motives are fascinating and lend an entirely new light on why this film remains terrifying nearly forty years after it was made. If what Kleinman believes is true, it officially makes Hitchcock's classic one of the most intricate, emotional, and psychological movies in history (and also explains why THE BIRDS II and other nature-runs-amok movies never quite succeed).

Its technology may look dated in today's CG world, but thank goodness Hitchcock again put story and theory over special fx. That is what makes a horror movie truly chilling and effective. Congratulations to Mr. Kleinman on a piece which should be required reading for all film students and theorists.

Jason Paul Collum
West Hollywood, CA

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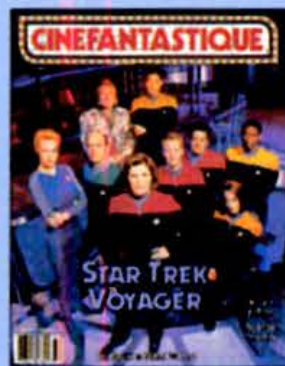
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